

EVANGELICAL
PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE:
BEING
FIFTEEN
SERMONS,

Preached in the Parish-Church of
St. MARY MAGDALEN in OXFORD,

On the following SUBJECTS:

The State of Innocence.	The Righteousness of Faith:
The Corruption of Nature.	An additional Sermon not
The Deceitfulness and Cor-	before published.
ruption of the Heart.	The Nature of True Holiness.
The Spirituality of the Law.	The Fruits of the Spirit.
The Penalty of Disobedi-	The Necessity of personal
ence.	Holiness.
Redemption by JESUS	The Means of Holiness.
CHRIST.	The Blessedness of the Righte-
Salvation by Grace.	ous.

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of the Author's Preaching, they will best serve
to declare what their doctrine are, which, as a
form of God, he has thought it his duty

P R E F A C E.

THE following Discourses are sent into the world, to obviate the manifold misconceptions and misrepresentations which the Author of them has lain under. As they contain the grand points of Christianity, and are a faithful epitome of the Author's Preaching, they will best serve to declare what those doctrines are, which, as a Minister of the Gospel, he has thought it his duty to inculcate. Being thankful that he was educated in the communion of the Church of England, he is much more so, that in the same he hath been called to the honour of ministering in holy things. Her only authentic standard of doctrine, exhibited in her Articles and Homilies, which he was required solemnly to subscribe, he professes himself to be conscientiously attached to, from a real persuasion that they contain the solid truths of GOD's Word. How carefully he hath followed that form

of sound words, a comparison of the ensuing Discourses with those Articles and Homilies will best determine.

As by the Royal Declaration prefixed to the Articles he is forbidden, so he presumes not to take them in any sense but that which a literal and grammatical construction of them imports; and he knows no authority by which any Minister of the Church of England can indulge himself in a greater latitude of interpretation.

As the Author cannot but regard subscriptions as bringing the soul under the deepest obligations to sincerity before the great Searcher of hearts, who requireth truth in the inward parts, he cannot think of those who in any degree allow themselves to trifle or prevaricate therewith, but as of men devoid of conscience towards GOD, and of honesty towards man.

That the Reader may have some general notion beforehand of what he is to expect; the following abstract of the ensuing Discourses is laid before him.

The Divinity of the SON and SPIRIT, co-eternal and co-equal with the FATHER, not the idol-monster
of

of inferior divinity, is here mentioned, in full opposition to the Arian and Semi-Arian; whose blasphemy, though more specious, is not less real than the more avowed and open blasphemy of the Socinian.

The maintainers of the doctrine of the rectitude of human nature, and the freedom of man's choice to good as to evil, will find these proud imaginations attacked, his hopes laid low, even in the dust, by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of GOD. The strong evidences of a fallen and corrupted nature, with its dire effects, are produced and confirmed; and the inability of man in his fallen state to any thing but evil, clearly, he trusts, made manifest.

The extent, purity, and spirituality of GOD's Law are laid open, that the conscience may discover and feel its transgressions against it. The eternal obligation of this Law is shewn; its awful sanctions declared; the impossibility of obeying it as a covenant of life evinced; and consequently the conviction of our state, as a state of helpless guilt, evidenced.

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The one great glorious and all-sufficient oblation of the SON of GOD for the sins of the world, as a true and real sacrifice, atonement and propitiation, is pleaded for ; its necessity and influence proved ; and the various blessings obtained for sinners thereby, set forth.

Faith, as the only means of justification and acceptance with GOD, is pleaded for, from considerations demonstrating the impossibility of righteousness before GOD any other way. And as Works of any sort are not admitted as the condition of our pardon and acceptance with GOD, the position that we are justified by Faith only, is maintained and vindicated.

The Works of Piety and Virtue which become men professing godliness, are at large opened, and the necessity of them enforced, from the only true principle of Faith which worketh by Love. The Antinomian blasphemy is rebuked and censured.

Finally, The means of Grace are strongly urged, and the diligent use of them shewn to be the only method of obtaining advancement in the divine life.

The

The blessedness of the religion of JESUS concludes the whole, as the natural result of the principles and practice above recommended.

These are the grand outlines of the following Sermons; and as they are the most essential matters which relate to salvation, they deserve a serious and attentive perusal.

The Gospel of CHRIST alone is the power of GOD unto salvation; and though many among ourselves have arisen speaking perverse things, as if a man, whatever were his opinions provided he was sincere in them and walked conscientiously according to them, was in a state of safety; yet the word of GOD seems to speak differently, that there is salvation in no Name but that of JESUS. And our Reformers were not afraid of the censure of uncharitableness, when they denounced a curse upon the maintainers of so latitudinarian an opinion.

It is earnestly to be wished, that every man who is called a lover of truth may read without prejudice, and judge with candor. As the great Searcher of hearts knows the design of these writings, they are by earnest prayer commended to his blessing;

bleſſing; and ſhould they prove the means of bringing but one ſoul to the knowledge of JESUS, and obedience to the truth, this labour of love will be amply repaid.

Remember, Reader, that awful day which is near, even at the door, when thou muſt answer for having ſeen, and I for having written, theſe Diſcourſes: Happy will it be, if we may then together give in our account with joy, and not with ſorrow.

OCTOBER 20,
1762.

T. H.

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S E R M O N I.

Of Man's State of Innocence.

GENESIS i. 26.

*And God said, Let us make man in our image,
after our likeness.*

THAT man once enjoyed a state of greater moral rectitude than he doth at present, was an opinion universally received in the heathen world. Their poets describe mankind in this happy state as favoured with the visits of their gods, as distinguished with the highest simplicity of manners,—as blessed with the spontaneous productions of the earth,—and abounding with universal peace and joy—from which concurring circumstances of felicity they have given it the title of “The golden age.”

B

Cor-

Corrupted as their relations are, they plainly indicate the source from whence originally they arose; and amidst all the dark shades of ignorance and error some bright strokes of traditional truth remain. For that man came not from the hand of his Creator the deformed and wretched creature he now appears, is certain: and we are no longer left to vague traditions and uncertain conjectures about it, but enjoy from the mouth of him, whose hand fashioned and formed us, the account of his own workmanship.

The creation of the heavens and the earth, with all their hosts, by the Almighty *fiat*, is in the preceding verses with the most sublime simplicity and brevity declared to us: when, to grace their new creation, and as the last stroke of infinite wisdom, power and love, consultation is held between the divine persons (a), and man is the result of it: Man, to be created in the image of God, as his representative and vicegerent here below, and as the head of the whole family on earth, by whom they should render unto their great Creator due homage and adoration.

(a) Gen. i. 26.

“ He spake and it was done:” for will and deed with GOD continually coexist—Behold the man ! “ created after the image of “ GOD:” adorned with every perfection of mind and body of which the nature he possessed was capable; and blessed in the divine approbation, infinite purity itself pronouncing him “ very good (b).”

This happy state of man, though but of short duration, deserves our most attentive consideration. Whether to affect our hearts in the view of what we are, compared with what we were designed to be,—or to endear to us the great Redeemer, the second man, the Lord from heaven, ordained to be the repairer of the breach which sin hath made;—or finally to make us long after the restoration of our original righteousness in part below, and to wait in hope for the glorious perfection of it above; when the redemption obtained for us shall receive its consummation; and what is begun in time, shall be completed in eternity.

I shall endeavour therefore, agreeably to the words chosen, To set before you some views of man, such as he was originally created—Shew

(b) Gen. i. 31.

you the blessing and felicity he enjoyed—Indicate the cause of his departure from it—and how we are affected thereby.

“God made man upright (c),”—his own image was stamped upon him;—as far as his nature could be, he was a faithful mirror, reflecting the communicable perfections of his divine Creator.

GOD's great design in all his works is the manifestation of his own glory. GOD's glory is then manifested when the thing formed exactly answers the end for which he created it. All creatures in their place and station, from the highest arch-angel to the lowest in the scale of rational beings, are therein, by the law of their nature as dependents, called upon to fashion themselves after the rule prescribed by their great Original. They are then perfect in their generation when they do so, and GOD is glorified in them. Man in innocence was thus “perfect and entire, lacking nothing:” his heart possessed the fullest approbation of GOD's holy will, and glowed with desire and delight to serve and glorify him on earth, as angels did in heaven. The whole frame of his nature exactly coincided with the rule of his duty.

(c) Eccles. vii. 29.

But let us take a more minute survey of him in his powers, moral and intellectual.

1. Of his understanding and judgment. GOD in creating the first man after his own image, "created him in knowledge (*d*)."

His natural knowledge of the world in which he was placed, and all the things and creatures around him, was no doubt most exact and comprehensive. A specimen of which we have immediately after his creation, when "GOD brought "unto Adam every beast of the field, and every "fowl of the air, to see what he would call "them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof (*e*)."

But this was the least considerable part of his wisdom.

He had the clearest knowledge of GOD himself, as the author of his being, "in whom he "lived and moved;" of the adorable perfections of wisdom, love, and power infinite displayed in every creature, and of the peculiar obligations lying upon himself, not only as a dependent subject, but as a favoured child; whom every bond of love, as well as duty, therefore should constrain to chearful universal obedience.

(*d*) Coloss. iii. 10.

(*e*) Gen. ii. 19.

Of Man's State of Innocence. Sermon. 1.

He had also the most perfect views of the rule of this obedience. GOD's law was written on his heart.—Where no law is, there is neither transgression nor obedience. Where no knowledge is, the law cannot bind. Perfection of obedience can only follow from perfect views of the rule prescribed, and conviction of the obligation to obey. This knowledge the first man compleatly possessed, fully assured withal that the laws enjoined him were not mere arbitrary commands; but in themselves most holy, just and good, fit for GOD to prescribe, and meet for him to obey, resulting from the very relation of creator and creature. So that to submit to these laws was perfect freedom, and in exact conformity to them, consisted man's only real happiness.

2. His will. Whatever his understanding proposed as fit, his will naturally chose. GOD's whole revealed will was followed freely, fully, universally. In this disposition to righteousness and true holiness did his likeness to GOD especially consist.

The excellence and perfection of Obedience depends on the full and free choice and approbation of the will. Hence, since the Fall, man's unrighteousness appears most conspicuously, and
consists

consists chiefly in the alienation of his will from GOD. This in its original was as exact a copy of GOD's will, as the impression on the wax is of the corresponding seal! and it followed invariably, as the needle doth the pole, the manifestation of Duty which GOD revealed. His will was not formed and set merely in a state of equal freedom to choose the good and refuse the evil; nor rested in an indifference to either; (for this would have been in itself faulty, as GOD's service to a will rightly constituted can never appear a matter of indifference and indetermination;) but it was habitually inclined to good, and averse to evil: so that whilst yet the power of falling remained, its natural bent was fixed intently in obedience to the divine commands. No fatal necessity indeed impelled it. For what glory could have arisen to GOD from such a service? Or what obedience, properly so called, could man have shewn, if fate, not choice, had determined his conduct? In the freedom of his service he alone could answer the end of his creation. Hence arose the mutability of his state; though free to stand, yet free to fall. Yet not so free to fall as stand; whilst all things within and without him conspired to engage his heart to GOD, and to fix unwavering his choice on that which was ordained his duty.

3. His affections, passions, and all the inferior faculties of the soul, were framed in due subserviency to the great design, as so many ready servants to execute what reason dictated, and the will approved.

Thus the entire soul of man was then the habitation of the Deity. He daily beheld, what he required, the universal service paid him. These passions, now become so turbulent and unruly, each ministered in humble subjection before the LORD. LOVE stood before the altar, and pouring on the sacred incense, kept up the hallowed flame. HATRED OF SIN (for yet no other ground of hatred was known)—hatred of sin guarded every avenue of the temple, and kept the gates that nothing might enter which defileth or maketh unclean. HOPE lifted up her hands and eyes to heaven, and shewed, by the intenseness of her countenance, where her anchor fixed. FEAR, with reverential awe, bowed down before the sanctuary, where yet no veil had hid the presence of the Deity. JOY told its raptures in hosannas of never-ceasing praise; and sought on earth to join those songs which beings of superior excellence poured forth before the throne of Glory. Whilst MEMORY unfolded the volume of divine mercies, and
stood

stood in pleasing contemplation revolving the past transactions. And CONSCIENCE, yet un-
follied, beheld, as GOD's vicegerent, the hal-
lowed service, and gave her approbation, as the
voice of GOD.

Thus was the soul beautiful in holiness, and
the body, where yet unbridled appetite and law-
less lust had found no place, yielded every mem-
ber as instruments of righteousness unto holiness.
Such once was man. "GOD beheld and blessed
" them, and bid them multiply and replenish
" the earth (*f*)," that there might be a genera-
tion to serve him, sharing in all their parents
excellence. GOD could not but be pleased with
the work of his hands; and, as the present mark
of his regard, crowned him with glory, honour,
bliss and immortality.

1. Man enjoyed a state of eminent glory. An
ingenious author hath suggested, that man in
innocence was clothed with a visible lustre: such
as we still image to ourselves, whenever we
form an idea of an angelic vision; clothed "with
" light as with a garment." It must be owned,
that there is more than one text of scripture that
seems to allude to this. And the transaction

(*f*) Gen. i. 28.

on the mount, when the “ body of JESUS was
 “ transfigured, and became white and glister-
 “ ing (g),” compared with the promise, of
 “ being made like unto his glorious body at
 “ the resurrection day (b),” seems to make
 it not improbable, that such external irradiation might be the attendant on man’s innocence until sin had uncovered his nakedness. And, if *Moses* by once beholding, not the face of GOD, but his back parts only, brought down from that vision “ a glory on his countenance, which the children of *Israel* could “ not look upon (i),” why might not the frequent, and as it seems familiar intercourse, which man in paradise had with the blessed GOD, leave deeper impressions of glory behind it? But however this may be, we are sure his body became the divine Architect. The last and most excellent of all his works below. And if, corrupted as it is now become, we cannot without some admiration regard it, “ so fearfully and “ wonderfully made (k),” what may we not conceive of its paradisaical glory? His soul, as the foregoing description intimates, must have been surpassing excellent; and animating such a

(g) Matt. xvii. 2.

(b) Phil. iii. 21.

(i) Exod. xxxiv. 30. 33.

(k) Psal. cxxxix. 14.

body could not but form a creature, the chief of all the works of GOD below.

2. Honour was heaped on him with a liberal hand. By nature, "but little lower than the angels (*l*)."
By grant, endowed with a dominion coextensive with the regions in which he was placed. The universal monarch of this lower world, for "GOD put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea (*m*)."
The majesty of man impressed awe upon the whole creation; their Maker's visible representative on earth.

3. Blessings surrounded him on every side. *Within* all was peaceful, serene, and happy. His soul, like the glassy surface of the sea, unruffled by the gentlest breath of air, had yet felt no tumult of contending corruption; but satisfied in itself, and conscious of innocence, was replenished with consolations pure and uninterrupted; enjoying with the sensible presence and favour of the blessed GOD, the most intimate and endeared communion with him, and constant tokens of his love, big with the most

(*l*) Psal. viii. 5.

(*m*) Psal. viii. 6, 7, 8.

ravishing delight. And *without*, all nature was formed to minister; not only to his wants, but innocently to gratify his senses. “Whatever “ was pleasant to the sight, or good for food “ (*n*),” arose in *Eden*’s happy ground; the “almighty husbandman had planted it (*o*),” purely to bless his favourite man: and what could be wanting, where GOD himself vouchsafed to prepare for him a residence of bliss?

4. Immortality crowned the whole. What he was, he would for ever have been: or had any change succeeded, it would have been a change from glory to glory. When translated to a higher state of bliss, his obedience should be still more transcendentally rewarded. “The “ tree of life (*p*)” sacramentally sealed the continuance of his bliss in paradise, whilst he persisted in obedience. And the declaration concerning “the tree of knowledge (*q*)” implied in it a promise, that his life should be eternal if he did not eat of the forbidden fruit. The body in innocence either had not the seeds of dissolution—or some powerful quality implanted in the tree of life might prevent it,—or immediately from GOD the fountain of life his vigour might be renewed

(*n*) Gen. ii. 9.(*o*) John xv. 1. Gen. ii. 8.(*p*) Gen. ii. 9.(*q*) Gen. ii. 17.

daily. Certain it is, that Death with all his hateful train of evils; sickness, disease, decay and pain were utterly unknown, untill sin broke down the wall, and introduced the monster pregnant with woe.

For such high favours, to be continued to his posterity, GOD might justly have demanded from him whatever marks of allegiance and fidelity he chose to impose: but herein, how wondrous was the divine goodness! He exacted no burdensome service, nor would debar him of any real enjoyment—he selected one single tree to be the test of his obedience, “forbidding him to “eat thereof on penalty of death (r).” The thing was in itself indifferent—determined by a positive command of GOD, the most easy to be complied with, and merely requiring submission to the divine will. In such a view, however, men may now cavil, Who would not have been content to rest the issue of his life and death on such a test, especially in the hands of One so highly furnished with every good and perfect gift?

Yet, astonishing to tell! the scriptures informs us that man, through the suggestions of the

(r) Gen. ii. 17.

devil,

devil, was seduced from his allegiance. His heart beguiled by false reasoning entertained unhallowed desires after forbidden knowledge ; then looking on the tree, lust kindled, and he is at last tempted to “ pluck and eat (s) :” he forfeits all his bliss, brings down the wrath denounced, and renders himself obnoxious to the threatened death ; death spiritual, temporal and eternal. Short is the dire description : but long and dreadfully felt the fatal consequences. A thousand questions which proud curiosity suggests, why and how this was permitted, the Holy Ghost hath been pleased not to resolve. Where revelation is express, implicit faith becomes our wisdom. To reason here is to turn infidel ; that so it was, is enough for us to know.

How deeply we are affected by the first man's disobedience is evident by daily bitter experience. *Adam*, our father and representative, in whom the whole nature of man then subsisted, tainted his blood by this atrocious act of treason. An act of the most complicated baseness and unprovoked rebellion. We were in his loins. “ In “ *Adam* all died (t). By one man sin entered into “ the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all, forasmuch as all have sinned (u).”

(s) Gen. iii. 6.

(t) 1 Cor. xv. 22.

(u) Rom. v. 12.

Man's nature fell under the curse. And as our Articles declare, "every child of *Adam* born into "the world, doth for this one act of disobedience deserve GOD's wrath and damnation (*w*)."

As I purpose to examine more distinctly the consequences of the Fall in some ensuing Discourses, I will conclude the present with the following observations.

1. What an alteration hath passed on the nature of man? "How is the gold become dim? "How is the most fine gold changed (*x*)? Who, beholding the present fearful change, can reflect on our original beauty of holiness, and withhold the tear of sorrow? "How art thou fallen, son of "the morning?"

When *Judah's* sons, escaped from the house of their prison, returned to *Sion* to build again the temple of the LORD, the new foundation, could be laid only by removing the splendid ruins of the desolated sanctuary; then came the remembrance of its former glories fresh into their mind, and "they wept aloud (*y*)."

And have not w
greater cause of sorrow, when we review the spiritual temple of the Most High laid desolate, and "swept with the besom of destruction?" Yea,

(*w*) Article IX.

(*x*) Lam. iv. 12.

(*y*) Ezra iii. 12.

when we feel our own concern herein, and at present experience in our hearts so doleful a contrast to that original excellence, when man was "polished after the similitude of a palace (z) !" Now, alas ! desolation sits on the threshold, and within darkness and ruin are spread abroad. The glory is departed from us ; God hath forsaken us. Guilt spreads its gloomy horrors over the soul ; fear trembles at the consciousness of certain judgment ; the voice of joy is fled, and self-despair utters her remediless cries. The fiends of darkness, those spirits who work in the children of disobedience, shed their baneful influence around, and Satan, now become the sovereign lord, invites every unclean and hurtful lust to take up their residence in the soul of man. Pride, malice, rancour, revenge, unbridled appetite, and inordinate concupiscence, occupy and pollute what once was God's temple. The divine inhabitant is fled, and death, dreadful monster ! death before unknown ! stalks around the ruined fabric, continuing to beat it wholly down, and lay it low even in the dust. " O ! who shall restore " our desolations, and build up again these waste " places of many generations (a) !"

2. The pride of man, which cannot brook submission to the humbling declarations of God's

(z) Psa. cxliv. 12.

(a) Isai. lxi. 4.

word, is the great bar to his restoration. The account which GOD hath given, we dare dispute and question ; puffed up by our fleshy mind, and vain in our own imaginations, we presume to reason against the divine truth, instead of bowing down before it ; and will not be persuaded that such effects have flowed from one man's disobedience, as those above described : much less that GOD's wrath and damnation justly lies against the millions of our nature yet unborn (*b*). To this we stand indebted for all the damnable heresies of *Pelagius*, *Arius*, *Socinus*, *Arminius*, and the different tribes of Deists. And as all the subsequent proceedings of GOD in the redemption of man, are so intimately connected with this leading truth of man's utter apostacy and fall from GOD ; where this is misunderstood or perverted, there the need of the Son of GOD incarnate, the necessity of an atonement, the want of another representative and covenant head, in short the whole dispensation of divine grace, in the work of redemption, must be mistaken or denied. Nor is it possible that any man unacquainted with the depth of our misery as recorded in the scripture, should see the necessity of the greatness of the remedy there provided.

(*b*) Article IX.

3. We cannot but admire the wonderful grace of God, that had compassion upon miserable man ; and would not execute upon him the death he had deserved ; but with the declaration of his high displeasure opens to him yet a door of hope in the promise of “ the seed of the woman who “ should bruise the serpent’s head (c).” God hath not left us, as he left the angels that sinned, in hopeless despair ; but hath raised up a horn of salvation for us ; hath appointed us another and safer Covenant-head, the second *Adam*, by whom we may escape from the dreadful ruin due to transgression under the first covenant. This seed shall break our bonds from off our neck : he shall deliver us from the power of Satan : he shall “ raise up our ruined tabernacle which is “ fallen, and close up the breaches thereof ; he “ shall raise up its ruins, and build it as in the “ days of old (d).” The manner how he shall effect this, by his incarnation, death, intercession, and final redemption of us, shall hereafter be more fully opened. Yet could I not close the present Discourse without some mention of God’s love in the first beam of Gospel-grace (e), that darted forth upon fallen *Adam*’s soul, and inspi-

(c) Gen. iii. 15.

(d) Amos. ix. 11.

(e) Gen. iii. 15.

red him (for nothing else could have done it) with sentiments of repentance towards a pardoning GOD. May we see in this promise the rich grace of our JEHOVAH ! May we feel a deep sense of the divine compassions and mercies therein displayed ; and may they have an increasing and more effectual influence on all our hearts to engage us to return to Him, from whom we have so greatly departed !

S E R M O N II.

Of the Corruption of human Nature.

R O M A N S v. 18.

By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.

THE Apostle in these words affirms the universality of that guilt which brings condemnation on the whole human race. He had in the beginning of the Epistle proved by scripture and experience, that “ Jews and Gentiles were all concluded under sin (*f*) ;” and

(*f*) Gal. iii. 22.

confe-

consequently exposed to suffer the penalty annexed to every transgression of God's law. In this and the foregoing verses he traces up sin to its origin, and shews by what means it entred into the world, and there maintains its dominion; namely, by the first man's fall, and the corruption of nature which thence ensued: which truths he labours to fix upon their hearts, both as a ground of deep and abiding humiliation, in the view of their deplorable situation by nature, and as containing the strongest motive to embrace and highly esteem that Gospel of the revelation of the grace of God, wherein "life and "immortality were again brought to light (*g*);" and a relief provided adequate to the necessity of fallen sinful man.

The knowledge of this our fallen state from scripture, and a clear conviction of its truth from experience are the effectual means, which the Holy Ghost uses in order to lead man, as a guilty, helpless, and self-despairing sinner to embrace and plead for the mercy revealed in Christ Jesus. "He convinceth us of sin, then of righteousness (*h*)."
Our disease must be felt before our remedy can be sought. "Jesus came to seek

(*g*) 2 Tim. i. 10.(*h*) John xvi. 8.

" and

“ and save only that which was lost (i). They
 “ that are whole need not a physician, but they
 “ that are sick (k).”

Yet here the Many stumble. Through unacquaintedness with the truth of their real estate, they “ think more highly of themselves than
 “ they ought to think (l) ;” either conceiting that man is still by nature as upright as ever, or that, however partially impaired by the Fall such powers and abilities yet remain with him, that he is of himself capable of pleasing God by the right exercise of his own reason, and exertion of his sincere endeavours : or, at least, though of himself he is insufficient, yet with the assistance of that common grace, which they assert is vouchsafed to all men, he hath still a measure of freewill to good and spiritual strength remaining ; which, if he will exert, shall effectually procure his acceptance with God. All which high imaginations, whilst entertained, cannot but puff up the vanity of man, naturally proud, and lead him to depend either more or less on himself, instead of submitting in helpless self-despair to him, “ who is mighty to
 “ save ;” whose office it is “ to justify the un-

(i) Luke xix. 10.

(k) Matt. ix. 12.

(l) Rom. xii. 3.

“ godly,”

“godly,” and with deliverance from the punishment, “to save his people from the power
“of their sins.”

For the undeceiving such as these—for the information of those who desire to know the truth—for the confirmation of the faithful—and for the greater humiliation of all—I shall endeavour at this time to prove it a *Fact*,

That man is fallen, *wholly* fallen from God.

May the spirit of God assist me with clearness of argument, and send conviction of the truth to every man’s conscience, giving you
“an understanding to know the scriptures,” and yourselves.

I am to prove to you, that man is a fallen creature; yea, wholly apostate from God. And I shall rest the proof on the testimony of the *scriptures* and universal *experience*; each of which, I trust, will convince those who reverence the authority of God, and coolly examine the evidence, that our state is truly deplorable and wholly corrupted. O! that it may lead every soul of us to him, “who alone
“is able to save to the uttermost all who come
“unto God by him (*m*) !”

(*m*) Heb. vii. 25.

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1st, The testimony of the *scriptures*. And in a point of such weight and importance, you may be sure to meet with the strongest assertions of this guilt and corruption. I will select a few of the principal, as they lie in their order, and open their contents that we may feel their force.

That God made man after his own image you have heard; an image to have been perpetuated in his posterity, had he continued in obedience. He fell: God's image was effaced. The curse hath succeeded. When *Adam* therefore begat a son, the Holy Ghost peculiarly notes, that it was "in his own likeness (*n*)," not the likeness of God, in which originally he gloried, but of his own fallen nature: a pregnant evidence of which presently ensued, when brother imbrued his hands in brother's blood, soon after, if not in the very act of sacrificing, the ordinance appointed an acknowledgement of their guilt, and the season when they were peculiarly called upon to be humbled for and repent of it.

From such an early specimen of man's nature, we may the less wonder at the following rela-

(*n*) Gen. v. 3.

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tion. "God saw the earth filled with violence, and that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, for every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (o)." Such is his description, "who knew what was in man." The heart of man was evil; yea, every thought of it; yea, every imagination, before the thought is framed or desire perfected: it was evil and only evil, without the least mixture of spiritual good remaining; nor was any moment excepted—evil continually flowed, as the stream from the fountain.

But it may be objected, the evil mentioned here was not *natural*, but *acquired*; men were not *born wicked*, but *made* themselves so. This point then let the next declaration of God determine. Does he not say to Noah after the Flood, in the view of generations yet unborn, that he "will not again curse the ground for man's sake," though the same provocation would again and must for ever exist, "because the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth (p)?" Here it is evident, that evil is charged upon the heart of man as its genuine produce. No reference is there in these words

(o) Gen. vi. 5, 11.

(p) Gen. viii. 21.

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to the persons then in being, or the influence of their or any future examples or instructions; but it is mentioned as arising simply from the corruption of nature.

In consequence of this the succeeding generations, influenced by the same corruption as their forefathers, turned every man quickly to the same ways; so that in the days of *Abraham* idolatry reigned universally. Nor could any thing better be expected from creatures conceived in sin, and shaped in wickedness; “for who can
“bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not
“one.”

As we advance, we have increasing proofs of the universality of this corruption. The Holy Ghost by the mouth of *David* assures us, that when “the LORD looked down from heaven
“upon the children of men, to see if there
“were any that would understand, and seek
“after God; lo! they were all gone out of
“the way, they were altogether become abominable there was none that did good, no
“not one (q).” And what was revealed to the father, was by the same Spirit manifested to the son, for this, among the first evils under the sun, the preacher found, and indeed the origin

(q) Psal. xiv. 2.

of all the rest: "That the heart of the sons
 " of men is full of evil, and madness is in
 " their heart while they live, and after that
 " they go to the dead (r)." The heart is a
 fountain full of evil, and the streams there-
 fore cannot but flow polluted; and all the time
 men live upon the earth, their hereditary mad-
 ness shews itself, till death closes the scene, and
 consigns the impenitent transgressor to deserved
 and eternal wrath.

Such apprehensions the holy prophets also
 had of the state and temper of man. "The
 " heart is deceitful above all things, and de-
 " sperately wicked; who can know it (s)?" It
 is a great deep of corruption: when we have
 fathomed it with the longest line of observa-
 tion, and found it to be indeed *desperately wicked*,
 still "the half is not told us." For who can
 know the fulness of evil which dwells in an
 apostate nature?

Our blessed LORD himself, when upon earth
 among other divine lessons he pointed out what
 peculiarly *defileth the man*, declares the fallen
 heart to be the source of all evil: "Out of
 " the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders,
 " adulteries, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies:

(r) Eccles. ix. 3.

(s) Jer. xvii. 9.

" these

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“ these come from within (t).” There is the seat of sin where Satan dwelleth : there the conceptions of it are formed, and thence they flow, as from the subterraneous fire proceed the earthquake, the sulphurous exhalation, and the burning lava.

And this is the necessary effect of being born into the world. For “ whatever is born of the flesh, is flesh (u).” The nature of man is called *flesh*, because it is wholly void of spiritual good, enslaved by fleshly lusts and appetites, and sunk into the brute.

A nature declared to be so *evil*, we must expect to hear condemned ; as it is written, “ by nature children of wrath (x):” wrath follows sin as closely as the shadow does the body : where sin is, there wrath will be ; and where wrath is, there we may be always assured sin hath been.

From all these, and many the like testimonies which might be adduced, and indeed from the intire system of divine revelation, where this is implied throughout all the transactions and methods taken for our recovery, I presume it will incontestably, appear, that man is at pre-

(t) Matt. xv. 19.

(u) John iii. 6.

(x) Ephes. ii. 3.

gent a fallen, corrupted creature; wholly defiled in his nature, and in consequence become loathsome and hateful in the eyes of divine purity. Such was the conclusion our pious Reformers drew from these views of scripture in the IXth Article: "Original sin standeth not
 " (as the *Pelagians* do vainly talk) in the follow-
 " ing of *Adam*, but is the fault and corrup-
 " tion of the nature of every man that natu-
 " rally is engendred of the offspring of *Adam*,
 " whereby man is *very far** gone from ori-
 " ginal righteousness, and is of his own nature
 " inclined to evil, so that the flesh always
 " lusteth contrary to the spirit; and therefore
 " in every person born into this world it de-
 " serveth God's wrath and damnation."

2dly, That the fact is really so, *experience* abundantly confirms. The truth is certain, though it be denied; but it is immediatly confessed, when the heart begins to be really enlightened to know itself. The ignorance of the blind, or their disputing against the light, cannot blot the sun from the firmament, nor persuade us that at noon-day there is darkness.

* The original is much stronger than our translation: *quam longissime*, is not merely *very far*, but literally *as far as possible*.

1. The experience of all ages attests the corruption which GOD's word declares. It was not in the antediluvian world only, that "the wickedness of man was great in the earth;" the complaints of every succeeding generation shew the same cause operating uniformly throughout. Consult the Heathens; they observed, confessed, lamented it, and their philosophers vainly dictated precepts, proved on the trial too impotent to restrain the power of corruption. Consult the scriptures; they describe all the nations, and even the chosen people of GOD "as a seed of evil-doers (y);" and their prophets rising up continually reproached them for their ungodliness. The account Saint *Paul* (z) gives of the Jews and Gentiles, learned and unlearned alike, shews the deplorable and universal deluge of sin. And have succeeding times mended the account? Surely not our own. Cast your eyes round, and read man's present apostasy, what neglect of GOD — what carelessness about the soul — what general dissipation — what disregard of the divine precepts, and contempt of the divine threatnings! — Shall I

(y) *Isai.* i. 4.

(z) *Rom.* i. and ii. Chapters.

add the grosser crimes that affront the sun, when "by swearing, and lying, and killing, "and stealing, and committing adultery," says the prophet, "they break out, and blood "toucheth blood (a)." What a scene appears to the observant eye! The lying prophets indeed "see visions of peace;" boast of man's moral rectitude; palliate the flagrant evils they cannot deny; and seek to hide themselves and others from the light, *speaking peace, peace,* "But what peace can there be, when our iniquities and our whoredoms are so many (b)?"

Where can you look, without beholding the broken tables of the covenant trod under foot? Whilst one part of mankind is plunged in the grosser crimes of perjury, drunkenness, all manner of lewdness, sabbath-breaking, profaneness and disobedience; the other more decently corrupt themselves and forget God—in Mammon's idol service—in honour's empty pageantry—in pleasure's thoughtless throng. *The world,* and the things of it are the universal pursuit, where envy, malice, disappointment, covetousness, ambition, successively torment the fortunate and the unsuccessful. The learned and un-

(a) Hosea iv. 2.

(b) 2. Kings ix. 22.

learned;

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learned, high and low, rich and poor, have their separate walk, concurring all in this, "to worship and serve the creature more than the Creator (c)." But these things men hate to see or hear of, though truths written as with a sun-beam; and, fixed on their own deceivings, will neither attend to their danger, nor be restrained. Hence so ineffectual have been all the means of the divine providence and grace. Doth GOD raise up faithful ministers to remonstrate against abounding iniquity? They hate and persecute them. Like their fathers that "killed the prophets, and stoned them which were sent unto them (d)." They smite them "with the words of the tongue," and would, if they had as much power as will, smite them with the edge of the sword. "All the day long therefore have we stretched forth our hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people (e)." They hate to be reformed, and "cast GOD's word behind their back (f)." Nor do they regard men much more than GOD. In general how ineffectual are all the restraints of human laws? How evaded or broken through!

(c) Rom. i. 25.

(d) Matt. xxiii. 37.

(e) Rom. x. 21.

(f) Psa. l. 17.

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What would be the effect, if only the wholesome laws of this land against sabbath-breaking, drunkenness and lewdness, were actually put in execution? And if these things are so, what a sad demonstration arises of man's deep corruption! Facts like these prove, that his neck is an *iron sinew*, that he determines to go on in the frowardness of his heart, "an evil heart of unbelief, departing from the living GOD (g)."

2. Another confirmation of this truth may be drawn from observation on the tempers of children, even before they have reached any years of reflexion. It will be found universally true, that "folly (that is sin) is bound up in the heart of a child (b)." And those who would be convinced of the corruption of our nature, need only observe the babe in the nurse's arms. Those perverse passions which afterwards in life break forth and fill our houses with violence, appear then in embryo. What anger may you remark in their little breasts when crossed or contradicted! What self-will and obstinacy do they shew under correction! What envy at favours done to others! And scarce have they

(g) Heb. iii. 12.

(b) Prov. xxii. 15.

begun to speak, but they begin to lie, and disingenuously and artfully, like *Adam*, seek to conceal their transgressions. So true it is, that “ungodly man is froward, even from his mother’s womb; as soon as he is born he goes astray, and speaks lies (i).” Nor can this be ascribed to the influence of education, or laid to the fault of bad examples before them. It is the case with those who are the most carefully educated; and the pious parent with grief beholds the seeds of corruption springing up continually in this their native soil, notwithstanding his pains by the rod of correction and by instruction to root them up.

Some indeed shew stronger dispositions to sin than others, and a milder constitution appears from the cradle in a few; yet none are excepted from the above symptoms of corruption, though, like different animals of the same savage species, some exceed others in ferocity. Nor can this be accounted for on any other principles than those which the scriptures reveal to us.—For what could be more impious, nay blasphemous, than to suppose that we came such out of our Maker’s hands as we now evidently are?

(i) Psal. lviii. 3.

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3. I add, as a corroborative proof to the foregoing remarks, the *miseries* which appear in the world. That “man is born to sorrow” and trouble, as the sparks fly upward (*k*),” cannot be denied. We hear on every side the complainings of the afflicted, the murmuring of the discontented, the repinings of the poor, the vexations of the disappointed, the cries of the sick, and the groans of the dying. What is the world but a *Bochim*, a place of weeping? Where sorrow cometh upon sorrow faster than *Job*’s messengers of evil. And who are exempted from the general lot? Doth not every living soul feel within the forebodings of approaching dissolution, the decays of age, the wastes of time, and know that he is, even in the midst of life, hastening to the dust, to the grave, the heritage of the sinner? Now can it be thought, that the GOD “whose mercy is over all his works (*l*), who never willingly “afflicts the children of men (*m*),”—can it be imagined that the GOD “whose name and nature is love (*n*),” would thus unprovoked lift up the scourge, and with scorpions chastise us?

(*k*) Job v. 7.

(*l*) Psal. cxlv. 9.

(*m*) Lam. iii. 33.

(*n*) 1 John iv. 8.

That

That be far from him: "He is righteous in
 "all his ways, and just in all his judge-
 "ments (o)." He giveth us less, but never
 more than our iniquities deserve. If it be said,
 True; but we have *actually sinned*, and are plagued
 for our *own* offences. I say, that will not ac-
 count for the scene we have been describing;
 for we see all the like evils, and death the
 greatest of them, "pass upon those who have
 "not sinned after the similitude of *Adam's*
 "transgression (p)." Stand by the cradle, and
 see that child of man scarce started from the
 womb; hear his doleful moans, see him convulsed
 and agonizing with pain; covered with loth-
 some ulcers, pining with continued anguish,
 and at last laid in his coffin. What can this
 mean? Is there no preceding cause, no meritorious
 ground for this heavy chastisement? To suppose
 it, would be making the Most High, like the idol
Moloch, pleased with dying infants cries. But here
 the mystery is solved: That babe, scarce a span
 long, is born a criminal—a corrupted crea-
 ture: he hath a nature which is enmity against
 GOD: the seeds of every evil are implanted in
 his heart, and if time hath not brought them

(o) Psa. cx'v. 17.

(p) Rom. v. 14.

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to maturity, they have already taken root “to bring forth fruit unto death.” And then we shall no longer question God’s righteousness in punishing, death being universally “the wages of sin (q).”

4. The acknowledgments of the best of men have borne a strong testimony to this great truth, That man is a corrupted creature. Whoever reads the scripture with an attentive eye, will necessarily observe the ancient Worthies full of their confessions of guilt and corruption. *David, Job, St. Paul*, high as their advancements were, “groaned, being burdened. A body of death” hung about them; a nature desperately corrupt, ever warred against the divine principle which God had communicated to them. By wrestling, striving, labouring, and through the grace of God beating down this body of sin, they were enable to make a successful resistance; tho’ sometimes after all their efforts they proved, to the bitterness of their souls, the prevalence of corruption. So true it is, that “the righteous scarcely ly are saved;” arising from the difficulty of resisting this strong bent of our fallen nature. And doth not the present experience of God’s

(q) Rom. vi. 23.

dearest children confirm the same truth? Who of them doth not feel "a law in his members warring against the law of his mind (r)?" Who is not often forced to say, "when I would do good, evil is present with me (s)?" Yea, do they not all go mourning to their graves under this burden, and long especially to "be absent from the body," that they may be delivered wholly from the corruption which now presseth down the soul?

If we seriously weigh what hath been advanced, can we doubt any longer of the universal corruption of our nature? Or will any man have the hardiness to assert henceforth, "I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin (t)?"

It remains therefore only to improve what hath been spoken.

First, For our deeper humiliation before God. Though we are never so deeply convinced of this or that sin, if we confine our views to particular facts only, the impression of guilt will be but partial, and though it may terrify, will not thoroughly humble and empty us of our self-sufficiency. To discover sin in its

(r) Rom. vii. 23.

(s) Rom. vii. 21.

(t) Prov. xx. 9.

true malignity, we must ascend from the act to the temper ; from the temper to the nature. And what can so entirely confound our pride as the view of ourselves above represented, where we are seen not merely corrupt in practice, but in principle ; not sinners by habit only, but sinners in nature ? This is the sin *exceeding sinful* (u) ; a sense of which must lay us in the dust, silence every plea, and bring the soul before the throne of grace, with the true sensibility implied in that penitent confession, which GOD himself hath put into our mouths, *unclean, unclean*, (x). A person thus convinced, knows himself to be one mass of corruption ; that he never was possessed of one good temper, nor of himself performed or could perform a single act pleasing to GOD. For what but uncleanness can proceed from the unclean ? And hence he is entirely cut off from help and hope in himself, and led freely and fully to make use of that help which the gospel sets before him in JESUS, who “ came to deliver us from “ the bondage of corruption,” by the efficacy of his blood, and the power of his spirit. The reason why so many who are awakened in a

(u) Rom. vii. 13.

(x) Levit. xiii. 45.

measure to a sense of sin continue still in bondage, and fruitlessly are labouring to mend *themselves*, is this, that they are not truly humbled : they are not acquainted with the depth and universality of the corruption which the Fall hath brought upon them ; nor consequently with the absolute impossibility of doing any thing pleasing to God, till he himself *justifies* their persons as *ungodly*, and *sanctifies* their nature as *unholy*.

Secondly, What a dreadful thing is sin ! One sin hath introduced all this misery into the world ; and yet we are daily trifling with it as a *little thing*. Instead of regarding sin as an evil and bitter thing, with what unconcern do we pass it by in ourselves and others ! And here again have we not a strong additional proof of the reality of our fall, in this deep insensibility to it, whilst we behold the consequences thereof so tremendously fatal ! O did we but consider how God hates sin ; did we but attend to the present marks of the divine displeasure against it ; or could we be persuaded really to believe “ the “ wrath to come ! ” surely there is not one of us, but from the bottom of his heart must tremble. As the “ earthquake which shook “ the

“ the prison (y),” and brought the trembling jailer on his knees, this view of sin’s dreadful evil, and the consciousness how deeply we stand chargeable with it, would shake our inmost soul, and lay us low before the footstool of the divine mercy, “ if yet the iniquity of our hearts might be forgiven us.” In how dangerous a situation then, and drawing on fast to eternal ruin, must that sinner be, who hath never yet groaned under the burden of guilt, never felt the bitterness and evil of sin, nor cried to him who “ hath appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself (z) !”

Thirdly, What a welcome message doth the Gospel bring to those who are truly sensible of their fallen state ! We cannot in such case hear with cold unconcern, that “ the Lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world (a),” we shall not pass by, and look upon his sorrows unmoved, when “ the LORD laid upon him the iniquities of us all (b).” We shall no longer dispute against the dispensations of God, nor proudly ask, “ How can these things be ?” But, humbly bowing before

(y) Acts xvi. 26.

(z) Heb. ix. 26.

(a) John i. 29.

(b) Isai. liii. 6.

the gracious throne, shall believe, admire, and adore. We shall then see that there is else-where neither help nor hope ; here all help, all hope revealed to us in the person of JESUS mighty to save. We all misery, GOD all mercy ; we all corruption, CHRIST all perfection ; we all guilt, he all pardon ; we all weakness, he all power ; we wholly lost in sin, he “ a saviour to the “ uttermost,” in virtue of the sufferings of his human, and the dignity of his divine nature. O that each soul of us really felt our disease ! how ready then should we be to submit to the divine physician, and lay our sinful corrupted souls at his feet ! Happy the man that thus comes to him in all his native wretchedness ! he never sent one such “ poor sinner “ empty away. He healeth all our infirmities, “ and delivereth the souls appointed unto “ death (c).”

(c) Psal. ciii. 3.—cii. 20.

S E R M O N III*.

The Deceitfulness and Corruption of
the heart.

JEREMIAH xvii. 9.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it ?

TO know ourselves, the philosophers reckoned the summit of wisdom : and however mistaken in the means proposed for that end, they were right in the assertion ; no knowledge being more necessary for us than this, nor any perhaps so difficult to be attained. None more
necessary,

* The three following Sermons, as to their substance, were preached about two years ago ; since which there hath appeared a treatise on SELF KNOWLEDGE by that excellent man of God Mr. *Walker* of *Truro*. There will often be found a coincidence of thought between us, which will not be wondered at when it is known, that under his ministry and instructions the writer of these Discourses was several years ago formed for the service of the sanctuary. He begs his readers to procure that little treatise of Mr. *Walker's*, where he will find many new hints on the subject here treated of ; and he cannot but recommend his other works already published, and now in the Press, as most worthy of a serious perusal.

necessary, because thereon stands, in the christian plan, all that superstructure of *newness* of life, the foundation of which is laid in deep humility, arising from the real knowledge of ourselves as *fallen creatures*. None so *difficult* to be obtained, because the subject of this knowledge is so extensive, and self-love and self-deceit, like a cunning painter, are so ready to misrepresent the features, that the real deformity of the figure is concealed, and we are led to admire the false and flattering portrait as if it was the true.

It shall be my endeavour therefore to open to you the truth of our state, and lead you into the discovery of your own hearts. But herein I must beg you will not be offended to see yourselves in a faithful mirror, the word of God; nor start back from the sight of your natural deformity, stripped of that mask which usually conceals the monster. I cannot flatter: God forbids it. His word declares, “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?”

There are many, indeed, who pretend to give a more favourable view of things; who talk of the dignity of man’s nature, his noble faculties, his self-taught perceptions of universal right and wrong; and if not bearing the first strong outlines

lines of virtue from the womb, at least represent him as a fair sheet, prepared to receive the genuine impressions of whatever is fit, and wise, and good. I have already said enough to confute this infidel representation ; but trust, in the progress of this Discourse, more clearly to reveal the truth, as it is, to every man's conscience, who will be at the pains to observe what passes within his own heart ; when it will be found, that the only dignity we can boast of, is our unhumbled pride ; that our native wisdom—even every attainment of the carnal mind is “enmity ‘ against God ;” and our fair traces of virtue, no better than the strong lines of a spirit which “ is earthly, sensual, devilish (d).”

We are now entering an unbounded field : for “ who can understand his errors (e) ? ” or who knoweth the deep things of a man, save *He* only, “ before whom all things are naked and open ? ” Let it not be thought, therefore, that the following is a full or exact representation of man's heart. It must be always said here, as the Queen of *Shebah* said to *Solomon*, “ The half is not told “ us (f) : ” yet, so far as it goes, the representation will, I trust, be found faithful ; and serve

(d) James iii. 15. (e) Psal. xix. 12. (f) 1 Kings x. 7.

at least as a clue to those who desire a deeper knowledge of themselves, to lead them into the dark labyrinth within ; and which they may lengthen as they advance, by closer and more intimate observations on themselves and mankind.

1. The radical evil seems to be *unbelief*, from whose fruitful stock the other corrupt tempers spring. “Ye shall not surely die (g),” found admission into the first man’s heart, in opposition to the divine denunciation, and emboldened him to eat. This spirit of infidelity is naturally rooted in the mind of every child of *Adam*, scarcely to be eradicated by the clearest evidence of revealed truth ; such “fools and slow of heart are we to believe what the scriptures have spoken (b) !” Because the *name* Infidel hath indeed usually, in the christian world, been stamped with infamy ; therefore the *profession* of infidelity few dare avow ; yet how universal practical infidelity is, a few observations will abundantly prove ; intimating, by the way, that the first work of the spirit of *God* upon the heart of man is this very thing, “conviction of unbelief ;” and therefore where no such conviction has been made, the soul continues as yet *dead* in a state of nature and sin.

(g) Gen. iii. 4.

(b) Luke xxiv. 25.

That in the heathen world the hopes of impunity, or disbelief of punishment, were at the bottom of all men's transgressions, is a truth which, I presume, will be readily admitted.

How else, in opposition to so many natural forebodings and traditionary notices, that "they who do such things are worthy of death," could they make themselves so easy under, and talk so gaily of their vices, as their writings evidently shew they did? Now they could be supposed to act thus only on this principle, that these notices and forebodings had no real foundation, or that some how or other there was a reserve of mercy: either that the gods took no notice of human actions at all (which was the affirmation of many, and the hope of more), or that they would overlook the little escapes of human frailty. Thus their unbelief operated. But I rather speak of *ourselves*, who profess to believe the revealed truths of God.

Who of us really and heartily submits to the divine declarations? How frequently do we admit them in words, whilst in works we deny them? You hear God's threatnings to punish sin with *death eternal* (i), yea *every sin* (k): Yet

(i) Rom. vi. 23.

(k) Gal. iii. 10.

who believes them? Did we really assent to and duly revere his word, how would every sin affect us! But now what is the universal hope and language? "I shall have peace, though I
" walk in the imaginations of my heart (l)." To establish this persuasion, we too, as the heathens did, give way to fallacious reasonings; either my transgressions are venial, and they will be overlooked; at least, they will not deserve so heavy a scourge as "the worm which
" dieth not, and the fire which is not
" quenched (m)." But what is this fire which is not quenched? It cannot be actual burning; for how can one lie in everlasting burnings unconsumed? And how know I, but the whole may be a delusion; and that "man dieth as
" the beast, and is no more?" Yea, sometimes it advanceth farther: "The fool hath said in
" his heart, There is no GOD (n)." As it is our interest as sinners that there should be none; many doubts about it are in the hearts of more than mention them. Such are some of the workings of *unbelief*; a man must be a great stranger to himself that hath not found their influence.

(l) Deut. xxix. 19. (m) Mark ix. 44. (n) Psal. xiv. 1.

Again,

Again, with regard to the other revealed truths of GOD's word, how deep-rooted are our objections to them! *Nicodemus* was not singular, when to our blessed LORD's declarations he answered, "How can these things be (o)?" Some, and the many indeed, shew so little regard to the word of GOD, that they cannot be so well said to doubt the contents, as to pay no regard to them; and are rather ignorant of the truths, than unbelieving. But no sooner does any man begin to examine, than he will find this "root of bitterness springing up to trouble him."

The Revelation which GOD hath made of himself, as subsisting in Unity of Essence, and Trinity of Persons; the divinity, person and character of the REDEEMER; his undertakings and the issue of them; the necessity and nature of the new birth unto righteousness; and the whole work of GOD's Spirit on the heart: these and the like truths, as related in the scriptures, will often be objected to. "The natural man receiveth not the things that be of the spirit of GOD; for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, be-

(o) John iii. 9.

" cause

“cause they are spiritually discerned (p).” Hence the Heresies and Schisms which have divided the church of God: hence all the doubts and distresses that have disturbed the hearts of the sincere; as well as the fixed rejection of the gospel, which possesses the mind of the avowed Infidel. Our *nature* is in fault.

And by the way, this shews the folly of that method of metaphysical disquisition, with which modern theologists the celebrated “disputers of this world” have led the crusade, and joined in embattled squadrons against the Infidels. For after all the boasted triumphs of reason, we see infidelity maintain its ground as firm as ever: though the outworks seem to have been carried, the body of the place remains unhurt; thither the besieged have retired, and are still as far from a surrender as ever. It is the heart not the head only which must be attacked. Infidelity is too much our nature to fall before the untempered sword of fallen man’s reason, it can only be subdued by “the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God (q).”

(p) 1 Cor. ii. 14.

(q) Ephes. vi. 17.

II. Pride hath set up its throne in man's nature. "Ye shall be as gods (r)," was the grand bait which the devil proposed to man. And since that day this unhallowed temper is rooted deeply in the heart. The actings of it are various, according to the objects on which pride fixes, or by which it is excited. Let us take a cursory view of some few instances thereof.

(1.) Pride shews itself on our *Wisdom*; for "vain man would be wise (s):" an insatiable thirst after *Knowledge* is the effect of connecting with such attainments ideas of superior excellence. Hence emulation and the pride of surpassing others, is the sinful motive usually urged upon the students of science to excite industry; that, like coursers straining for the goal, they, may each carry off from their competitors the envied prize. An extensive knowledge can be the lot of few, because leisure or abilities are wanting: but the affectation of appearing wise, at least wiser than we are, is general. Who in conversation, whatever be the subject, is not desirous of appearing *knowing*? whether it be divinity, politics, or any other science? How

(r) Gen. iii. 5.

(s) Job xi. 12.

readily,

readily, and even unasked, do we advance what we know, often drop hints of deeper views of the subject than we discover ; and where ignorant, artfully seek that our ignorance may be concealed ? Why do you expect a deference to your judgment ? Why are you so loth to appear mistaken in a proposition, or opinion you have advanced ? Why pay so little deference to the opinion of others, wiser, older, and more godly men than yourself ? Why “ so swift to speak, so slow to hear (1) ? ” Why pleased to have your parts admired, or your genius complimented ? Why hurt when contemned as a person of mean understanding, especially in your profession ; or an author of no abilities ? Come not these from pride of heart ?

(2.) Pride on *natural*, is as common as on *mental* endowments. Did you ever see a Beauty without vanity ? And where fine features are wanting, the elegance of form supplies the fuel ? Are not these the envy of their own sex, and the idols of the other ? Hence the secret pleasure of being taken notice of, and the deep chagrin of being neglected—the arts practised to attract attention—the easiness of credit given

(1) James i. 19.

to flattery—and the affectation in many, even to gray hairs of appearing young, genteel or handsome.

Nor is this temper less obvious amongst men. Though womanish beauty would be counted an effeminacy, yet to be manly, agreeable, genteel in person, strong in body, and of a fine address, is just as much coveted after by one sex, as beauty is by the other; is the ground of the same pride when possessed or commended for it, and of the same discontent if unpossessed or unnoticed.

Dress affords in *both* sexes, an auxiliary to nature and to pride.

The fashion is consulted: be it expensive or indecent or dangerous, pride must be gratified, though at the loss of health and wealth and modesty. And what a pleasure to be well dressed? What a satisfaction to appear the first in any thing new, and in taste? What a glow of conscious distinction does it add to the countenance?—And how much of the time, and study of the polite world, is engrossed, by this poor ambition to shine the best dressed figure in the circle? But if more grace, more elegance in others eclipses us, what jealousy is awakened, what a desire to find fault—and a
pleasure

pleasure to censure? Hence not only the contention among equals, but the confusion of ranks and station: and the difficulty sometimes to distinguish the master from his servant, or the chambermaid from her mistress.

(3.) The gifts of Providence, however adventitious, afford also an abundant occasion for pride. *Honour* is the food of ambition. We all aspire to be *something great*, and every step of advancement fills us with a secret delight, and higher apprehension of our own importance.

Whoever will reflect on his heart, when he first set out in life, will remember those castles, which repeated disappointments have not, perhaps, been able yet to raze. And afterwards though our hopes are more confined, they still soar; and secret discontent with what we are, urges us to pursue what we would be. We regard whatever is bestowed on us as less than we deserve; and whilst we look forward with greater eagerness from every summit gained, we look back with conscious satisfaction on those whom we have left behind. Whoever makes observation on the world, will see this verified in every profession; for ambition is not confined to dignity. The meanest officer in a corporation is affected in the same way as the minister next the throne;

and he must be a great stranger to himself who hath not felt the glow which recent honour brings.

Riches also give the like gratification, as affording us an opportunity of distinction. And the show of affluence is often made, even where want at home must support the finery abroad: for to be thought indigent is extremely mortifying. The gay equipage, the laced livery, and the multitude of useless attendants, make a figure in the world. The elegant Villa calls forth the same spirit from the heart which *Nebuchadnezzar* felt when he said, "This is great *Babylon*, that I have built for the house of my "kingdom (*u*).” And when we are affecting to overlook these things, we do it that they may be admired, and are secretly delighted with the commendation of them. The *shew* of Vanity appears also alike in every inferior station, all vie with their neighbours, and pique themselves on their little distinctions. The mechanic that rises not to a chariot, is proud to be drawn by his own palfry. Whilst the lady, whom neither birth nor education have placed in the superior ranks of life, no sooner finds the

(*u*) Dan. iv. 30.

wealthy tradesman, who can supply the expence, than she affects the shew, and gives herself the airs of a person of fashion—and to descend farther still, even to the lowest of the people, the same pride is gratified in the expence at a country feast, or a party of pleasure on a Sunday.

Money itself also ministers to pride, and adds a new gratification to covetousness. Is there pride in that man yonder, whose figure is so mean, and dress so sordid, complaining of the hardness of the times and the scarcity of cash? Could you know the pleasure he feels when he hears it whispered, “He is a wealthy man; no man commands so much ready money;” you would be no longer at a loss to determine. His pride is as much flattered by *that*, as his neighbour, who rides by in gold and grandeur, is by his *shew*, supported, it may be, by mortgage-money out of this rich miser’s purse.

Family is another fund of vanity, the foolishness of all pride, yet how general? Those of high birth look down on their inferiors as a different race of beings; cast an eye of disdain upon every creature around them, whose pedigree cannot be traced to some ennobled source, and treat them as *nobody one knows*. As you

descend the distinction is still observed, and connexions and relations, however distant, give us an air of superiority over our equals in station. The gentleman regards the vulgar with a disdainful contempt, as sprung from the dust. And even in the parish Work-house the contest for family will be maintained by the decayed tradesman's orphans, against the children of those of baser original.

Our worldly *character* also, in its various references, continually leads us to seek "the praise of men more than of GOD(x)." Pride would be distinguished—and what will it not do to maintain, increase, or recover any measure of esteem? What a vexation and uneasiness do we find at the loss of this idol! and how unwilling are we to believe those declarations of GOD, "that the friendship of the world is enmity with GOD; and that if any man will be the friend of the world, he must be the enemy of GOD(y)!" Hence all that dislike to the cross,—the caution wherewith all religious singularity is avoided in a wicked world—and the constant labour of reconciling the inconsistent services of GOD and *Mammon*.

(x) John xii. 43.

(y) James iv. 4.

Hence

Hence that inordinate desire to please men: hence, especially, the cowardice of ministers, and the compliances of many with the corrupt principles and manners of the times, who secretly condemn the things they in practice allow. Reputation is at stake, and Conscience must conform a little.

Thus Pride operates.

I have reserved,

IV. The most malignant appearance of it, where religion is concerned. *Spiritual pride* appears in a high conceit of our own excellence above other men; a desire of appearing more holy than we are, an exterior appearance of devotion, and scrupulous attendance on the ordinances of worship, without humility and the love of God in the heart.

In the duties of *devotion*, either in or after any holy exercise, this will appear. Have you never found your heart, when you have been at what you call your prayers, pleased with yourself, as having performed some work meritorious? Are you not led to compare yourself with others who do not frequent the Church so often, and say, "Stand by thyself; I am holier than thou?" You pray, and communicate, and give alms, and mind you duty:

Are you never “thanking God you are not “as other men (z) ?” These are the symptoms of pharisaic pride. Where this is discovered and disclaimed, a more refined self-exaltation appears in the pleasure we take in a lively frame of mind, when after the exercise of prayer, or preaching, or exhortation, we hear that whisper, “Well done,” within us ; or when we have been engaged in these exercises, especially before others, and fancy we have not acquitted ourselves with that propriety, fullness and excellence, we proposed to ourselves, we grow uneasy and dissatisfied—Pride working just as strongly in our dissatisfaction as in our self-applause.

But pride on *duties* is still increased by pride on our *graces*. The very fruits of God’s spirit corruption would pervert ; our meekness under provocation affords a handle for self-approbation. Our zeal for God is made subservient to our own glory. Yea, our very humility shall sometimes cater for our vanity, our abasements shall exalt us, our confessions of unworthiness make us think highly of ourselves, and our very condescensions be the footstool on which vanity would

(z) Luke xviii. 12.

raise itself. Well may we say of our heart,
“Who can know it?”

As the effect of the above, *Hypocrisy* creeps in.
“Deceitful above all things is the heart.” Deceitful respecting others: willing they should “think more highly of you than they ought to think.” Hence that desire of appearing an experimental christian; seeming to know and feel more than you have known or felt. The secret satisfaction of having it whispered “What a gracious soul! How deeply acquainted with the truth!” especially if you are young; and therefore it should be esteemed more uncommon. This is *spiritual hypocrisy*. And you may deceive *yourself* as well as others. If you have learned to talk of the glory of God’s grace, you may conceit you have possession of the thing; and that your prayers are as real as your expressions are ready: easily persuading yourself, that the opinion others have of you hath foundation, and that you are indeed what they think you to be. Hence the delusions that too many fall into, “vainly puffed up, and taken in the snare of the devil.”

I must rest here for this time, to conclude with a few observations.

1. How deplorable is the ignorance of those who boast of the goodness of their hearts, and

fancy themselves free from all the workings of pride! Can there be a stronger evidence, that “the god “of this world hath blinded their eyes (a)?” Yet how many put in pretensions to such goodness of heart, who live and die in the vanity of their fallen mind; unacquainted with their real state; unperceived the bondsmen of corruption, and blindly led to ruin, whilst they promise themselves the surest place in the kingdom of heaven!

2. If GOD hath made any discovery to us of these things, it should stir us up to a more diligent search and inquiry into ourselves: “We know nothing yet as we ought to “know (b).” The deepest-read in self-knowledge have much of their hearts unseen: as *Ezekiel*, the farther he went “into the chambers of imagery (c),” the more he saw of abominations: I may venture to say the same of our fallen nature, the more we know of it, the more evil we shall know of it;” and the less we shall like it. A thousand perversenesses are still overlooked; many deceptions undiscovered; and hidden principles of pride will be found lurking, where we least of all

(a) 2 Cor. iv. 4.

(b) 1 Cor. vi

Ezek vii 12, 15,
suspected

suspected them. It should teach us therefore to examine ourselves narrowly, and pray earnestly to Him who alone can open our hearts, and make us understand our secret faults, crying always, "Search me, O Lord, and see the ground of my heart; try me, and examine my ways; and look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (*d*)."

3. The discovery of their deep corruption should not discourage those who feel the burthen of it. To know the truth of our state is most desirable, and the more explicit our views the better. The cure is partly wrought when the disease is thoroughly known. Far from being cast down with these views, it is our comfort, that the more sensibly convinced we are of sin, CHRIST will appear more needful, and more precious to us. They will see "grace abound, who have felt sin abound (*e*)."

In the REDEEMER's blood and righteousness, there is to be found compleat, eternal Redemption. The most unbelieving, the proudest nature, "the fountain opened in his heart for sin, and for uncleanness (*f*)," can cleanse;

(*d*) Psa. cxxxix. 23. (*e*) Rom. v. 20. (*f*) Zach. xiii. 1.

and make the foulest conscience whiter than snow. O that we may all flee thither, and seek "that balm which is in Gilead, and the "physician there (g)!"

(g) Jer. viii. 22.

S E R M O N I V .

The Deceitfulness and Corruption of the Heart.

JEREMIAH xvii. 9.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?

I HAVE been endeavouring to enter into the heart, "to discover that root of bitterness" which is our nature; and to open to you the grand sources from whence the overflowings of ungodliness arise: distinct and clear discoveries of which have the most direct tendency to bring us low into the dust of humiliation, and to lead us to him "who taketh away the sin of the world (b)."

(b) John i. 29,

That

That "GOD is of purer eyes than to behold
" iniquity (*i*)," and that "no evil can dwell
" with him (*k*)," is evident from his nature,
and the discoveries he hath made of his adorable
perfections in his word. He cannot but require
of his creatures to be like himself, possessed of
" truth in the inward parts," but "our inward
" parts are very wickedness (*l*)."
We are become the very reverse of his nature : the whole
man is corrupt before him ; root and branch he is
polluted. We are become "enemies in our
" mind : the carnal mind being enmity against
" GOD(*m*)."
He searcheth our hearts, and sees the native wickedness there enthroned : and what
can so provoke his displeasure, as the perfect
views of this intire apostasy of our nature from
him? Our "transgressions may be many, and
"our back-slidings increased ;" but what are all
compared with the natural deep-rooted aversion
of our hearts to him? A child, though some
times disobedient, through the prevalence of
temptation, may be born with, where dutiful-
ness is still the habit ; but do we see that he is
determinately and constantly bent on offending—

(*i*) Hab. i. 13.

(*k*) Psal. v. 4.

(*l*) Psal. v. 9.

(*m*) Rom. viii. 7.

that his whole heart is contriving how to grieve and provoke us—that neither gifts nor corrections, promises nor threatnings restrain or overcome him—what human patience would not be wearied and an utter expulsion from the family ensue? But tho' we have been all this and infinitely more against the Father of mercies, he hath tempered judgment with mercy, and in the depth of his wisdom and the riches of his grace, whilst he hath shewn his fearful indignation against the sinful nature, “in his own son made in the likeness of sinful flesh (n),” hath found out a way to spare the sinful persons. Yet neither the rich mercy nor the righteous judgment of his dispensations can be seen before the real discovery of our corrupt and sinful state appears: till then we can neither revere the holy, nor love the pardoning God.

Let us therefore continue the inquiry into ourselves, and see what *branches* spring from this corrupted tree, where unbelief is the root, and pride the stock; and it may be said of them, “Their name is Legion, for they are many (o).” The most remarkable I shall endeavour to point out to you under the heads of *self-will, disobedience*

(n) Rom. viii. 3. (o) Mark v. 9.

ence, impatience, wrath, envy, hatred, malice and revenge; the grand characteristics of a fallen spirit.

1st, *Self-will* is the first branch of pride. We "would be as GODS." Our will is our law. *Sic volo, sic jubeo; I am resolved—I order it—I won't be contradicted*, is the language of fallen nature. You see this in every station of life: How imperious are we! How peremptory our commands! How determined to be obeyed, right or wrong, when we have fixed our resolution! How obstinate in our errors! How deaf to advice! "I will have it so," is thought reason sufficient. But, lords as we are, we dwell among others like ourselves; our wills interfere; and amidst this contrariety of choice what but confusion can ensue? Hence, whilst each will have his own way, the world is in a continual tempest; the winds contend, the waters foam, and disputes and animosities, and every evil work, disturb the peace of families, of cities, and of kingdoms.

Closely connected with this is,

2dly, The spirit of *disobedience*. We cannot brook restraint from GOD or man. The yoke of GOD's commands is irksome to us, and our subjection to human superiority constrained.

We

We aspire after independence. This is the darling wish of our souls. Hence it is not only the general thought of our heart, that God is a hard master, and his commandments grievous, so that when we obey or are restrained by them, it is merely through fear; but also, dreadful as the sanctions are, we dare to break the sacred bonds, and “cast away the cords from us.” And this disobedient spirit particularly manifests itself in our rebellious dispositions towards those whom God hath put in authority over us. From our infancy with what difficulty are our stubborn hearts bowed to submission! What a propensity is there in us for doing what we are forbid? Restraint only whets, as it were, the appetite of concupiscence. As we grow up, disobedience grows with us; and in our various stations shews itself. In the *state* every little politician would be a prime minister, and murmurs that he should be subject to those whom he conceits so unfit to govern. He assumes the right therefore to censure their measures, to evade as much as he dares their injunctions; nor counts it any sin to “speak evil of dignities,” or to “withhold custom from those, to whom custom is due.”

In the *social* connections of life this spirit still more strikingly appears.

The

The forward youth thinks it hard to have a father or master contradicting and restraining him. He would be glad to be left to himself and his own management, and hates the needful correction or reproof. Whoever have brought up children can witness with aching hearts with what difficulty they bent their stubborn necks, and how often they have proved rebellious and obstinate against them. "Disobedient to parents (p)," is the character of our ungodly nature.

God hath constituted the husband to be "the head of the wife;" and hath pronounced as his will, "that her desire shall be to her husband, and he shall rule over her (q) : " yet how apt is the weaker vessel to wish the word *obey* out of the matrimonial contract, and from the time she hath vowed submission to labour the inversion of that order which God hath established; whilst the best and most conscientious will be the readiest with shame to own how often they have been wanting in that "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in God's sight of so great price ? "

(p) Rom. i. 30.

(q) Gen. iii. 16.

The school-boy and apprentice regard usually their state as that of hard servitude ; and though their neck be brought under the yoke, their heart sighs for liberty. The rod can hardly restrain them from taking it before the time ; whilst at certain seasons the spirit of disobedience is too strong to be withheld by fear, and subjects them to deserved correction.

The servant, discontented at his station, thinks it unreasonable always to submit to a man like himself—he brooks not to be found fault with—his heart, and often his tongue, answers again—on his own head he will often act without orders, and sometimes contrary to them—He kindles at rebuke, and will not bear expostulation—Instead of “ being subject with “ fear and trembling, not only to the good “ and gentle, but also to the froward (r) ;” it is with difficulty that the most gentle masters or mistresses are born with ; whilst the common and too just complaint is, the sauciness and perverseness of servants, and the general wish that we could live without them.

3dly, *Impatience* is among the desperate wickednesses of the heart : it is that rising of heart

(r) 1 Pet. ii. 18.

we feel against GOD or man, as our will is crossed by them, or our expectations disappointed.

(1.) Against GOD: This temper frequently appears under his corrections and afflictions. It was not without deep knowledge of the human nature, that Satan said to GOD concerning *Job*, "Put forth thy hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face (s)." For such usually are the effects produced by his chastisements.

1. Under *poverty* this impatience is seen, especially if we are reduced, and have tasted the comforts of affluence. When *Agur* prayed against poverty, he gives this reason for it, "Lest I take the name of my GOD in vain (t):" he knew how apt the heart was in such a state to murmur. And who is there thus needy, that hath not experienced the risings of discontent, and secret repinings against the all-gracious Dispenser of good things, as though he had acted unjustly partial? Have you been brought low? Doth the world frown upon you? Are you reduced to be obliged to others? How dissatisfied are you with this your situa-

(s) *Job*. i. 11.(t) *Prov.* xxx. 9.

tion! How many hard thoughts of GOD rise up in your mind! Whoever hath been conversant among the indigent, must have been often a witness of this complaining discontented spirit. We dare charge GOD foolishly, and find fault with him, merely because he “does what he will with his own (*u*).”

2. The same spirit is seen under bodily *afflictions*. “Doth GOD lay his hand heavy upon you? Is your flesh dried up as a potted sherd, and your moisture as the drought in summer (*x*)? Doth he cut you off with pining sickness, and from day even to night make an end of you (*y*)?” How restless are you under his hand! How fretful your temper! Your body is not more uneasy. You may not seem in your own eyes to be angry with GOD, but be assured that this is at the bottom; and you give your anger vent on those around you. Nothing is done to your mind. You are scarcely touched, even by the friendly hand that means to assist you, but you complain. The least delay or mistake makes you impatient; and troublesome as by your sickness you unavoidably are to your attendants, you make your-

(*u*) Mat. xx. 11, 15.(*x*) Psal. xxxii. 4.(*y*) Isai. xxxviii. 12.

self

self still infinitely more so by your discontent with them; and whoever comes near you must hear your complaints, aggravated, repeated, as though there was "no sorrow like your own." And what is this but that spirit which "fretteth against the LORD (x)?" Whoever hath attended sick beds, must have had full conviction of this truth.

3. *Impatience* rages when GOD takes away some darling our heart was fixed upon. GOD in his wise providence afflicts us for our good; and when he sees his gifts abused or made a snare to us, he kindly resumes them. Then what a ferment is in the soul! and often violent "as a bear robbed of her whelps," our repinings testify our displeasure against GOD. Who hath not heard the cries of impatient anguish? Who hath not seen the determined obstinacy of inconsolable grief? Their idols, like *Micah's*, are snatched away: their life was bound up in the husband, the wife, the child, the friend, or some dear object of their affections, and they are dead, irrecoverably lost to them: and now, like *Rachel*, "they refuse to be comforted (a)." Then what reflec-

(x) Prov. xix. 3.

(a) Jer. xxxi. 15.

tions arise in the mind against GOD, as though cruelty, not kindness, injustice, not mercy, directed the blow! Whilst the fate of their darling object is depending, what restless anxiety about the issue! And when it is violently plucked from their arms, how madly impetuous is the language of their hearts! "It is better for me to die than to live *b.*)" Hence in some the most fatal effects follow: by impious violence on themselves they seek to fly from GOD; or in their sullen sorrows pine away. And where matters go not to this excess, still, who doth resign to GOD his gifts as he ought without once impeaching his kindness, or murmuring at his dispensations?

Many other providential disappointments might be brought to evidence the same thing. But from what hath been already said, whoever observes his heart will find sufficient proofs of this spirit within him.

(2.) *Impatience* discovers itself also with respect to *ourselves*. We cannot bear our burdens with content: our weaknesses, infirmities, the discoveries of our corruptions, all operate this way. When we do not answer the high opinion we

(b) Jonah iv. 3.

have conceived of ourselves—when what we have employed our labours upon does not come up to our expectations—when we cannot please ourselves in any work we have in hand—when by our imprudence or mistakes we have involved ourselves in trouble—how uneasy have we made ourselves ! turned self-tormentors, and added not only sorrow to sorrow, but sin to sin ! This will be particularly observed by those who have some knowledge of their own hearts in their *spiritual* concerns. If you have fallen into temptation, and been laid lower in your own eyes by your misbehaviour—if after many struggles and hopes of victory, you find still the risings of old corruptions—if you enjoy not the peace and comfort which others do—if you have not made that advancement in the divine life which you proposed to yourself—in these and the like instances, instead of humbly lying down in the dust of self-abasement, impatience will be ready to increase the evil, by fretting at being found so bad. This deserves to be much remarked, because I fear sometimes the professors of godliness are apt to indulge complaints about their corruptions, and may mistake them for tokens of humility, when

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in reality they favour more of the spirit we have been describing.

(3.) This evil temper is shewn also towards *others*. We can as little bear disappointment or correction from the world, as afflictions from God; and hence a continual ground of uneasiness. We have naturally no compassion for the faults or infirmities of others, and yet require the greatest indulgence to our own. Hence not only in the weightier matters of the world, but on the most inconsiderable trifles (and here ofteneft it may be observed, because these oftener occur) this spirit works. You have something to be done, and the person, through ignorance or mistake, either cannot or does not please you—such an one acts foolishly in his business, or imprudently in his christian conduct—you cannot after all your pains prevail on this person to follow your advice or submit to your instructions—upon such occasions what is your temper? Are you not heated, hasty, impatient with them? and your spirit sharpens your remonstrance. Thus you exasperate, when you should either overlook or correct with mildness. On the other hand, when you yourself offend, how little can you

bear reproof ! Though sweetned with love, how hardly is it palatable; and how intolerably offensive if accompanied with harshness or aggravations !

4thly, *Anger* is another temper of the fallen spirit. "It is the resentment shewn of injuries or provocations, whether real or imaginary." Our pride is generally at the bottom—that is hurt—then our bosom rises, our countenance changes, our voice is quickened, our words are bitter : and this frequently is the case on the most insignificant occasions. We cannot bear contradiction : though being in the midst of many like ourselves, we must meet with it—we have set a value upon ourselves which others do not seem to take notice of—we are ill-used by those from whom we least expected it—we are imposed upon by those we trusted—we hear in company something disrespectful said of us—or it is reported to us by others—our person is insulted, our character defamed, or our friend injured—then the heart boils, and passion struggles for vent : sometimes circumstances restrain it, sometimes it rages and is violent, "returning evil for evil, and railing for railing." And this temper especially breaks out at home, where,

on how trivial a matter are our houses filled with disputes, and noise, and clamour, and every evil work !

5thly, *Envy* also is what the fallen spirit lusteth unto. "It is the repining the heart feels at another's superior excellence or prosperity." Because his father loved *Joseph*, his brethren hated him; they regarded with an evil eye the coat of many colours, and it had nearly cost him his life. We cannot bear that another should be more esteemed, more successful or richer than ourselves—especially if he was once our equal—particularly if he be of the same profession, or competitor with us for any distinction. Hence, since "many run in the race, and one only receiveth the prize," the effect of disappointed pride appears in all men; for *all* in some things come short of their wishes, and murmur, however, in the eyes of others, they are themselves the objects of envy. This is the source from which most part of the conversation in company arises—each hath his complaints—accuses the partiality of the world—wants to hear something depreciating of the envied rival—is ready to derogate from his worth—and pleased if any step be taken to lessen his excellence or remove him out of the way.

way. Hence slander, scandal, backbiting, lies, are invented, reported, propagated: and in general, it becomes a difficult matter among such misrepresentations to know a man's real character.

And whilst this vice universally prevails in the world, those who are separated from the world will find the remainders of the same corrupt temper. If you see a brother, whose graces are more eminent, and whose advancement in the divine life surpasses your own—especially if thereby he is highly esteemed by those, whose favour you value—above all, if his superior gifts or graces eclipse and make you less taken notice of—you must be very deeply humbled, indeed, if envious jealousy against such an one, however disallowed, does not find some place in your heart.

6thly, *Hatred*: “This is the settled dislike “of those by whom we have been injured, or “whose conduct in any manner reproaches us.” Thus “*Esau* hated *Jacob*” for depriving him of his blessing, “and in his heart said, The “days of mourning for my father are at hand, “then will I slay my brother *Jacob* (c).” And

(c) Gen. xxvii. 41.

our hatred betrays itself on the appearance of the person disliked, especially if it be unexpected. When "his brethren beheld *Joseph* "afar off, they said, Behold, this dreamer "cometh (*d*)," and took counsel to slay him. You hear it often said, "I forgive, but I cannot forget." Here the root remains. Though an apparent reconciliation seems for a time to heal the wound, it continues to fester within. This is the case in a thousand particulars which might be instanced, but it appears no where more frequently than where religion is concerned. There is an eternal "enmity put "between the seed of the serpent, and the seed "of the woman (*e*); and those who are of the latter must be hated of the former. As their light "reproves abidingly the works of "darkness, and testifies of the world that its "deeds are evil (*f*)," it cannot but produce hatred. Since the day that *Cain* hated *Abel*, "because his works were righteous," so it is still. "He that is born after the flesh, persecutes and hates him that is born after the "spirit (*g*)." And no marvel: "He that was "a murderer from the beginning," could not

(*d*) Gen. xxxvii. 18, 19.(*e*) Gen. iii. 15.(*f*) Eph. v. 11, 13.(*g*) Gal iv. 29.

but

but stamp this strong mark of his image upon the fallen heart.

7thly, *Malice* : This is envy and hatred united and heightened. It is peculiarly the spirit of the devil. "It is the delight men feel in the wickedness or misfortunes of others, particularly of their enemies." This temper shews itself abundantly in the world. There every day proves the general conspiracy against God—not content to serve the devil a little, we seem ambitious to serve him much, as though it was our veriest happiness. To engage a number to join in the same "excess of riot"—to see the drunkenness or quarrels of others—to teize and exasperate those you know to be fretful—especially to prevail on any who made profession of religion, to betray it—what satisfaction does it give to the heart ! And how ready are you to glory over them, and, devil-like, turn accuser, and report, and reproach them for the very sins you tempted them to commit ! You hear something evil of your enemy, and how happy are you to run open-mouthed into the world and spread it, heightened by your relation ! One differs from you in his religious sentiments, and happens to give a handle for offence. How confidently you at-

tribute it to the *corruptness* of his principles, and reproach the whole body for the faults of an individual ! If any misery or calamity hath befallen the object of your hatred, doth not your heart feel a secret glow ? Does your rival in trade fail, what a satisfaction ! Is he that troubled you cut off by death ? The tolling-bell is music in your ears. Is your adversary fallen ? Immediately your cry is, " There, there, so would we have it (*b*). " At least, if you prudently conceal your satisfaction, your heart feels the secret delight—and even, when you pretend to pity, your very compassions are tainted. These are the indications of the malicious spirit.

8thly, *Revenge* brings up the rear ; the last, but not the least of our spiritual wickednesses. " It is the desire or actual infliction of some punishment, according to the dictates of malice, on those who have offended us. " Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the LORD (*i*). " But man, the arrogant assumer of GOD's prerogatives, would be saying, " Vengeance is mine, I will repay. " Hence the contrivances how to return the injuries we have suffered—the

(*b*) Psal. xxxv. 25.(*i*) Rom. xii. 19.

watching

watching the best time and opportunity for it—the restlessness till that time comes—the eagerness to seize the moment—the violence if your adversary falls into your hand—and the pleasure you take in tormenting when your enemy is in your power. It is a common saying, “Revenge is sweet;” and it is a true one: yet what a dreadful mark of a diabolical spirit, and an especial proof of the doctrine advanced in the text, “that the heart is above all things desperately wicked!”

If the hints above given have the blessed effects of leading us more experimentally into the knowledge of ourselves, then shall not our labour have been bestowed in vain. For the following effects will be produced thereby:

1. In proportion as we discover the vileness of our nature, we shall have more admiring apprehensions of the transcendent riches of God’s grace, who thought upon us in this low, this deplorably wretched and wicked estate. That when we were enemies to God and his law, and no one trace of any thing pleasing remained, but “evil, and that continually,” was found in us—that when we were become abominable, yea altogether abominable—that when by nature we were as apostate from God as the devils them-

selves—that even *then* God should have compassion on us—that he “should think towards “us thoughts of peace, and not of evil,”—that he should plan out a covenant of redemption—that he would give his own Son—that “the “brightness of the father’s glory” should be incarnate—that he should “lay on him “the sins of the whole world,”—that “in “his own body on the tree he should take away “sin by the sacrifice of himself,”—that he should bleed and groan and die in torment, in ignominy, in dereliction, for us, miserable sinners; for us, ungodly; for us, his enemies; for us, that must have fallen into the belly of hell; that he might redeem, justify, sanctify, glorify us—“This indeed is love (*k*)! Love, the height and length, and breadth and depth of which surpasseth knowledge (*l*).” Did we know more of ourselves, we should know more of God’s love to us; and because “much hath been forgiven us,” be led to “love him much (*m*).” What a motive is this to search into the depth of corruption, that we may feel ourselves more constrained by the debt of gratitude!

(*k*) 1 John iv. 10.(*l*) Ephes. iii. 18, 19.(*m*) Luke vii. 47,

2. If such is our nature as hath been described, how absolutely necessary does it appear, and how little need we marvel at what CHRIST said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of GOD (n)!" These cannot be the tempers which make us "meet for an inheritance among the saints in light." Whilst they are undiscovered and unsubdued, "what communion can there be between righteousness and unrighteousness, CHRIST and *Belial*?" The necessity of the new-birth, of a real participation of a divine nature, of a change, not of names or opinions, or outwards, but of heart, is indeed at present strangely unknown or derided; whilst *one part* think their nature *good enough*, and regeneration no better than mystic *Enthusiasm*; and *the other*, that if we had been baptised in the Church, have partaken of her ordinances, led a decent life, and shewn a zeal for the externals of religion, that *then* we have all the regeneration which the scripture exhorts us to look for. But alas! the superficial religion of the latter is as far from real conversion of heart, as the blindness or infidelity of the former. We must be born again; we must experimentally

(n) John iii. 3.

know a transition "from death unto life (o), and
 "from the power of Satan unto God (p)." We
 must be "renewed in the spirit of our minds (q);
 "we must put off the old man (r), and put on
 "the Lord JESUS CHRIST (s); we must be trans-
 "formed into his image and likeness (t)," before
 we can ever hope to "see him face to face."
 And how earnestly will they seek it, who feel
 how deeply they need it, and know that except
 the Holy Ghost work this effectual change in us,
 "that which is born of the flesh is and must be
 "for ever flesh (u)!" Happy is the man who,
 taught in any measure to KNOW himself, flies to
 the throne of grace, and, according to his neces-
 sities, pleads with importunity for an abundant
 supply of the Spirit of CHRIST to lighten his
 darkness, help his weakness, discover the de-
 ceitfulness, change the corruption of his nature,
 and to "make him a new heart, and create a
 "right spirit within him." Such a one shall be
 rescued from his native misery, and "grow up
 "into him, who is the head, even CHRISIT,"
 till in heaven "he comes to the measure of the

(o) John v. 24.

(p) Acts xxvi. 18.

(q) Ephes. iv. 23.

(r) Ephes. iv. 22.

(s) Rom. xiii. 14.

(t) 2 Cor. iii. 18.

(u) John iii. 6.

“ stature of his fulness,” and everlasting victory over a desperately wicked heart shall crown his happy labour.

S E R M O N V.

The Deceitfulness and Corruption of the Heart.

JEREMIAH xvii. 9.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?

WHY is dust and ashes proud? Who can solve the question, or shew satisfactorily wherein we can justly glory? Surely the more we examine, the more we shall be convinced, that “Pride was never made for man?” for *man*, a creature so fallen; so polluted in his nature; so desperately wicked in heart; so corrupt in all his ways. Yet dust and ashes, *sinful* dust and ashes, will be proud: and vain man vaunts his dignity; glories in the rectitude of his nature; admires his excellencies; extols his goodness; and boasts almost

almost his divinity, "as God knowing good and evil;" as self-taught to decide on every instance of right and wrong—as naturally charmed with Virtue's beauty, and disposed to follow the rule of right. Strange ignorance! Infatuation lamentable! and claiming much more justly our pity, than the lunatic in his cell, crowned with straw, and strutting in tattered robes of fancied majesty. "KNOW THYSELF," O sinner! a mass of corruption, polluted both in flesh and spirit; an abomination in the eyes of the Most Holy! Know thyself, and be confounded. "The crown is fallen from thy head; thy glory is departed from thee;" thy purity is lost: arise then, and take to thee thy proper garments; cloth thyself in sackcloth; confess "thou art vile; abhor thyself in dust and ashes (x)."

Happy will it be for us, my friends, when the discovery of our hearts has laid us thus low. "Before honour is humility (y)." By "*Pride*" the angels fell from heaven (z);" by pride man fell on earth; by pride we sink deeper still in the abyss of sin; and by pride obstinately persisted in, with them we must for ever be cast into the bottomless pit.

(x) Job. xl. 4.—xlii. 6. (y) Prov. xv. 33. (z) 1 Tim. iii. 6.

Humility and lowliness of mind are the steps by which we can ascend from the depths of corruption. An abasing view of our fallen state, can alone force us to fly for refuge to *JESUS*, the sinner's friend—in him to find the pardon of our guilt, and deliverance from the bondage of corruption. Precious humility, what a friend art thou to fallen man ! But how may we obtain this humility ? The answer is, *KNOW THYSELF*. So far as we see the truth of our condition, so far as we really inquire into the mystery of iniquity within ; so far as we are convinced of the deep and utter apostasy of our nature ; so far, and no farther, shall we be humbled. Now to effect this hath been my purpose in the preceding Discourses on these words, which subject will be concluded in the present. O that the truths they contain may, through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, be made the means, if but to any *one* soul, of true humility ; and consequently, of leading you to Him who promises “ to revive the “ spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart “ of the contrite (a) !”

(a) *Isai*, lvii. 15.

That the heart of man is desperately wicked I have attempted to shew; it hath appeared, that he is by nature *unbelieving, proud, self-willed, disobedient, impatient, angry, envious, full of hatred, malicious, revengeful*. I shall farther pursue this mortifying subject in the consideration of his *earthly-mindedness* and vile affections.

We are fallen under the dominion of *flesh* and *sense*. Every object from *without* tends to ensnare us, and to draw forth the worldliness and concupiscence which is *within* us. All our wisdom is chiefly employed in contriving to make provision for these; whilst the lusts themselves, “the lust of the eye, and the lust of the “flesh,” insatiate as the grave, are daily crying, *Give, give*.

1. The *lust of the eye*, or the love of money, is naturally fixed in our hearts; and how deeply you may easily see, if you will consider the general manner of *getting* or *using* the unrighteous mammon.

It must be observed, before I enter particularly into the workings of this temper, that covetousness sometimes reigns *alone* or chief in the heart, sometimes it is *accompanied* with other interfering vices; *alone*, when the covetous man is merely intent upon heaping up, longs

to

to see so much in his bags; goes and counts over his sums with secret delight; marks every piece; and worships with most unfeigned affection his golden god. Sometimes *accompanied*, when other vicious passions also call for their gratification. And here the greatest profusion of money may be consistent with the most covetous desire of it. The statesman, whose love of the unrighteous mammon shall make him infamously to fleece the public, may yet spend his thousands of that ill-gotten treasure in bribery and luxury. The tradesman, whose attention to enrich himself makes him wear out his life in almost sleepless industry and care, may yet be a squanderer of those very riches in a tavern or bagnio. The highwayman, whose love of filthy lucre tempts him daily to hazard his neck at the gallows, may yet be found bestowing that very idol on his mistress in a brothel. Yet these may all afford as strong instances of this temper, as the miser. The only difference is, their other vices at times predominate, and clash with each other. Pride, lust and vanity, take the ascendancy, and then the gains of covetousness are dispersed, and new calls arise to recruit their store. Hence a young person may be as covetous

tous as an old one, though the former never kept five guineas long at a time in his possession, and the other never spent five shillings out of his thousands but in absolute necessities. I note this, because few persons imagine that covetousness and prodigality can be so nearly allied.

I am now to shew that the love of money is naturally fixed in our hearts, and this will be evident in the desires of the heart after it. Examine yourselves therefore, whether some or other, more or fewer, of the following symptoms have not appeared in you. When you have seen another's affluence, have you never felt the secret wish, "O that it were mine!" When alone, hath not your mind been running out in imaginary prospects? grasping at the distant hope of affluence? and pleased with the shadow, though every appearance of actual success was wanting in your views? Hath not this principle set you on contriving how to abound? Yea, hath it not been in your imagination the chief good, and infinitely superior to "the kingdom of God, and his righteousness?" *You* at least must be convinced of this, who will consider the anxiety which habitually you shew after the world—the vexations when.

when disappointments rob you of the expected gains—the delight when the unrighteous mammon flows in upon you—and the uniform plan you keep in view, of securing and increasing your store. The world wakes with you early in the morning, and the thoughts of gain prevent the thoughts of God—you go forth into the world engaged in the pursuit of gold, not godliness—you weary yourself, it may be, till night—and late lie down with this upon your heart. Thus it is the first thing with you when your eyes open, and the last before they close—your very dreams, it may be, are tinged with the same desires, and place you still amidst the business, merchandise, and labour of the world; where busy fancy raises a new scene of hopes, and fears, and joys. Nay, even your very prayers (if time be spared for what you call your prayers) are interrupted by the same worldly thoughts. The sabbath is polluted; the holy table of the LORD, which you presume to approach, is defiled with them; your “heart is full, and out of its abundance” the streams flow uninterrupted.

I would observe, that whilst the constant prevalence of this temper, in a greater or less degree, is the sure mark of the bondage of
corrup-

corruption in the worldling; the *renewed heart* will find great cause to mourn over the remainders of the same inordinate concupiscence, and to condemn those idolatrous desires which would intrude themselves even into his most solemn services.

From this source a correspondent conversation naturally flows. Men feel themselves in their element when the discourse turns upon matters suited to make them worldly-wise. They will take pleasure in recounting their advantages: "It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but when he goeth away, then he boasteth (b)." The lips of such persons will be open to flattery, and fawning toward their patron or their customers—they will be very ready to reflect on a tradesman that undersells them—will studiously avoid, as painful and interruptive of their views, whatever is "for the use of edifying, which might minister grace to the hearers"—and be silent when such discourse is started—but when the world and the things thereof is the topic, their tongues will be let loose, and their attention fixed: these are the symptoms of earthly-mind-

(b) Prov. xx. 14.

edness; and where circumstances give them scope for appearing they never fail, though in different measures, to discover the power of this corruption in the heart. And this will be farther evident in their manner of getting money, which will ever be, more or less, by acts of fraud and injustice—by unreasonable profits—by adulterating their goods—or being scanty in their measures—by lending at unlawful advantage—by making the necessities or ignorance of others a handle to oppress them—by borrowing or running into debt, when they have no real intention or prospect of repaying—by making the LORD's day a day of merchandise—by withholding restitution of ill-gotten gain—so true it will appear that the love of money is the root of all evil; and that wherever it is men's grand aim to “abound, and they make haste to “be rich, they cannot be innocent (c).”

There is no wickedness of the heart more flagrant it may be, or less taken notice of than this. “The god of this world” hath closed the eyes of his votaries, yea, hath gilded with every specious name the most abominable of our corrupt tempers: we call our covetousness a proper regard for our families—our slavery to mammon, ho-

nest industry—our love of the world, prudence—and our rapaciousness, minding the main chance. And thus whilst this maxim is received, “Get “ as much as you can in an honest way ;” that is to say, without risking your neck at the gallows, or destroying your worldly reputation ; we see men, the slaves of this abominable temper, quiet and easy, without any apprehensions of their sin or danger ; yea, rather blessing themselves in having cared for their own houses, and acted the part of a good relation in accumulating for them so genteel a portion.

The *use* of money, as well as the *manner* of getting it, shews the covetousness of the heart. By natural obligation, as well as by the positive law of GOD, we are bound “ to do justice, and “ to love mercy (*d*):” and in this chiefly consists our duty towards our neighbour : but to both of these covetousness opposes itself more or less ; and makes us *unjust* and *unmerciful* towards our fellow-creatures. A faithful examination of our hearts will shew us quickly in what measure this spirit hath reigned in us.

Justice is “ the rendring unto all their dues, “ and owing no man any thing :” but covetous-

(*d*) Micah vi. 8.

ness hath harpy talons, and is too ready to hold fast whatever it hath grasped. Hence money is parted with as so many drops of blood by the avaricious : and the most feel a greater reluctance to pay than to receive. In worldly dealings we may observe it, in peoples backwardness to discharge the debts they have contracted—in their endeavours to beat down the price of any thing and save a trifle, it may be, at the expence of many lies—in their great partiality to self in their bargains and contracts—their grudging the necessary demands of the state, and readiness to defraud it in customs and taxes—their robbing GOD's altar of the portion his service demands—counting lightly of his ministers, and thinking it no duty to communicate to them of their *worldly things*. These, among innumerable other instances of injustice, are the evidences of a covetous heart.

Mercy is “the regard we show to objects in distress.” Covetousness makes a man selfish, and unfeeling to the wants of others—Though many a one thinks himself enough exempt from covetousness, if he can say he is punctually honest, and pays every one his due. But alas ! “If our brother stand in need, and we shut up our bowels of compassion from him,” how little will our honesty excuse us from the charge
of

of being uncharitable ! The subsistence and working of this selfishness you must needs have observed, by the most transient glance on the world or your own heart. When an object of distress hath fallen in your way, have you never avoided it ; and, like the Priest and Levite, passed “by on the other side (e)” When that could not be done, and the importunity of want was clamorous, how surly have you spoken to hide your covetousness, and added unjust reproach to the necessities of the indigent ! How little have you made it your care to inquire for the needy, and to relieve them ! Where and when have the hungry been fed, the thirsty drank of your cup, or the naked been clothed by you ? the sick visited, the aged, the widow, and the orphan relieved by your kind hand ? and this, when it was in the power of your hand to give, without distressing yourself, or violating any duty you owe to others. Though it may be, on such occasions you have a ready excuse : You were greatly afraid of encouraging idleness—you have a family of your own—you do not abound yourself—But are not these vain prettexts to cover the selfishness of your heart ! I mean not to coun-

(e) Luke x. 31, 32.

tenance every idle vagrant ; but where you know there is need, is your hand open ? Your care for your family is laudable, but it shews the covetousness of your heart, when it makes you insensible to others wants. You may be low yourself ; but though you labour with your hands for a maintenance, you may still have two mites to spare to the greater indigence of others ; and whenever, according to your ability, you are not “ ready to distribute, willing “ to communicate (*f*),” you are certainly under the influence of covetousness.

It must be remarked indeed, that there are many, whose splendid appearance of benevolence would seem to exempt them from uncharitableness : but it must be observed also, that a tender constitution may not be able to withstand the cries of an object in distress—that the affectation of liberality may overcome the sordidness of our temper—that the hope of “ hiding “ a multitude of sins (*g*) *,” by such (ignorantly esteemed) commutative acts of goodness,

(*f*) 1 Tim. vi. 18.

(*g*) James v. 20. 1 Pet. iv. 8.

* A greatly mistaken text as to me it seems ; *hiding the multitude of sins*, refers to the sins of the converted person in one place, and in the other intimates the charitable care to conceal them, as opposed to reporting them.

—that the importunity of a friend whom we would not disoblige, and many other sinful principles, not the true *love of mercy*, may be the motives to our charity. And this is always evident, if the pittance from your abundance goes from you with reluctance—if you are afterwards commending yourself for your generosity—or if, while you are not wholly destitute of deeds of alms-giving, you seek not to be in a capacity to abound in them, as you might and ought to be. If it be not in your heart to deny yourself many things, that you may have the more to bestow—if you have not the wants of your brethern habitually as your concern—you may discover the want of mercy, and consequently the influence of selfishness.

I might further observe the same respecting *lending*, for a small sum lent is often a great charity. Covetousness hates to hazard a penny : the payment must be secured before the purse-strings open, whatever be the call : “ Go, and “ come again, and to-morrow I will lend,” says thy selfish heart, “ when thou hast it by “ thee.” The tricks, evasions, and castings about of the covetous are indeed endless ; and oftentimes the greatest oppressions are cloaked under the shew of friendship and kindness.
But

But what hath been said will serve to shew what our hearts naturally are, and what in too many they continue to be; and must be in all, if preventing, restraining, converting grace doth not keep within bounds the stream of corruption, or in a measure dry up its fountain.

2. The *fleshly lusts* which dwell within us, shew the “desperate wickedness of our hearts.” Lawless appetite hath now seized the reins, and hurries on the body to sensual gratifications. By *indolence* and *excess* provision is made for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof; and, as the effect, *impurity* follows in thought, in word and action.

1. *Indolence* the flesh delights in. Labour and diligence are our aversion; though since the Fall expressly enjoined us. But in general labour we must. The world produces nought but briers and thorns, till subdued by the sweat of the brow. Though a few by the possession of affluence become in some measure exempted from labour, the far greater part must work before they eat; yet the love of indolence will appear the same in the one as in the other. The morning comes, with what reluctance do you rise! It is too soon, it is too cold saith every man’s natural sloth. “All

“ little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep (b).” Necessity urges you to rise : but the same temper follows you ; “ the fool foldeth his hands together (i):” any little excuse is easily seized to suspend your diligence, and trifle away your time. And when you do work, you often feel the thought, “ What a weariness is it !” “ I wish I had enough to live upon, I would then sit down at my ease.” If you have seen others, whose affluence hath been construed into a prescription for idleness, have you not envied them as more happy than yourself? And in other points you will find yourself the sluggard even in your work, not doing it with *all your might*—an eye-servant—a loiterer—lengthening the intervals of leisure allowed you—or returning with reluctance to your task. Or if every nerve is strained, and you are labouring night and day to gain ; pray what is it at the bottom of all this ? Why usually an intention to be idle at the last, and spend the end of your life in pleasing indolence, when you can say to your soul, “ Soul thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease ; eat, drink, and be merry (k).”

(b) Prov. xxi. 22.

(i) Eccles. iv. 5.

(k) Luke xii. 19.

In the superior ranks of life this temper seems to reign uncontrolled, except where ambition interferes. What is usually the life of the great and the affluent, but varied scenes of pleasure, calculated merely to gratify indolence? Amusements, cards, &c. visits, sleep, fantriving, eating, drinking, with some insignificant work (which may be better called *play*)—these take up all their time; and to-morrow is only a repetition of the sloth of to-day. The rich cannot be even at the pains oftentimes to superintend their own accounts. The dignitary in the church fills his stall at his ease, and devolves the drudgery of prayer and preaching to some needy substitute; and the fine gentleman and lady must have one to help on and off the burden of their clothes. Labour is the general aversion; whilst every thing that can gratify indolence is contrived and purchased at any expence.

It is from this temper that, though we so often hear every body complaining of the badness of the times, we can find so few willing to exert themselves to restrain the abounding iniquity. The magistrate, the minister, the people, care not to trouble themselves; the law lies dormant, zeal is extinguished, and sloth sheds its soporiferous influences around.

2. *Excess* follows close on the heels of indolence. They mutually minister to each other. Meat, drink, and sleep, are what the natural man lusts after, not merely to sustain nature, but to pamper it; not to satisfy her just demands, but to gratify her inordinate appetites.

The niceness and curiousness of the affluent, where *eating* is among the grand concerns of life, is pretty evident. The high sauces, ragouts, and strange inventions of the pimps of luxury, to provoke the desire of eating beyond the demands of hunger, and the general readiness to partake of such incentives, shew by what bestial appetites we are governed. Thus on one table the four quarters of the globe shall be ransacked for turtle, and ortolans, and spices and desert, at an expence that would have provided for an hundred families of the needy. And, where circumstances forbid such daily indulgence, yet the same temper shews itself. Hath not a feast pleased you; and the prospect of its approach been dwelt upon with delight! When some nice dish was brought on, was not your before palled appetite whetted anew? or did you not regret that it came in so late? Did you never take a pleasure in talking of the good eating you partook of, or were going to? Have you never
oppressed

oppressed nature till she sunk under the load? You will need only observe a Sunday evening's congregation to discover in it the gluttony of the poor, as much as in the sleepy loll on the soft couch after dinner of such as are daily more luxurious.

The desire of inordinate *drinking*, though perhaps not more common, is yet more taken notice of. What a thirst is there after liquor! The brute beast quenches his drought at the river, and is satisfied; whilst the man who leads him thither, more bestial, -drinks when nature is no longer thirsty! Hence, at the expence of health and strength and fortune, and every consideration that can be near or dear, we see the drunkard "filling himself with "strong drink;" pouring in liquid fire, that he may thirst and drink, and thirst and drink again. But when men proceed not to these grosser excesses, and fashion or decency, or some such-like motive withholds them, the heart still shews the disposition, by the pleasure felt "when the liquor sparkles in the glass and "moveth itself aright (*l*)—by sitting long at "the cups"—by taking what is culled a *cheer-*

(*l*) Prov. xxiii. 31.

ful glass—by customary indulgence after meals, through pretence of I know not what advantage to digestion, &c. and by frequenting *needleless* places of public entertainment through pleas of business or company.

These symptoms shew the tendency of the heart where grosser excesses may have been avoided.

Inordinate *love of sleep* comes under the head of sloth, long continuance of it belongs to excess. When a third part of your time or more is spent on your pillow—when a great deal of the day as well as the night is wasted on your bed—when you rise heavy, and not refreshed from your morning or mid-day slumbering—it can hardly be but that irregular appetite must have dominion over you. The body thus indulged is filled with the fuel of lust; and no marvel that it makes so many to be “like fed horses in the morning, every one neighing after his neighbour’s wife (m).”

3. *Impurity* is strongly the bent of man’s natural heart. I will not enter into the grosser indulgences of it, which modesty bids rather to conceal than mention; but only hint at some of those more unnoticed instances of it, under which

(m) Jer. v. 8.

so many lie the slaves of their vile and wicked hearts, without suspecting the dreadfulneſs of their ſtate. Our fallen nature is full of lewdneſs: we need no other temptation but from within. “Every man is tempted when he is “drawn away of his own heart’s luſts and enticed (n).” What corrupt imaginations riſe up in the hearts of all from the days of their youth! How readily are they entertained, indulged, delighted in—eſpecially when alone and on the *bed* of floth! And where this is the caſe, how ready are you to pleaſe your eyes with ſome inflaming object! How prone to ſeek the ſnare, where you have felt evil deſires excited—and to purſue, inſtead of avoiding the perſons and pleaſures whence Satan hath taken occaſion to entangle you? Theſe are the beginnings of luſt: “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, and “thence adulteries (o).”

The tongue will partake of the defilement that is within. Groſs indecencies in converſation are indeed at preſent in general remitted to the vulgar; but the delicate laſciviouſneſs of the more refined, ſhews the ſame abominable temper in the ſecret enuendo—the double entendre

(n) James i. 14.

(o) Matt. xv. 19.

—and the thin veil of a witty expression suited more artfully to convey, and more deeply to fix the vile idea upon the memory. These “unclean spirits have gone forth out of your mouth (p),” or your fancy hath been entertained with them—you have either smiled approbation, or seemed only to frown, in secret pleased—at least you have not testified your abhorrence of them. Whilst too often, what openly-corrupt conversation goes forward! and, shameful to tell! even the old make the young to blush with their obscenities. The conduct under such an influence must be conformed to the temper.

I will not speak of the more criminal indulgences of the flesh, of the grossest nature; but would have every one of you call to mind the many undue liberties you have taken with any person, because you were alone—the dishonour of GOD’s temple, your own body—the satisfaction and pleasure enjoyed in a loose book of amours or plays—or the like obscenities more strikingly expressed on the stage—the feasting your eyes with an indecent picture—the allowed, though sinful *freedoms* so common at balls and in

(p) Rev. xvi. 13.

other mixed companies—and the innumerable ways which the flesh contrives decently to gratify its corrupt desires. Whilst, as the effect of such indulgences, your minds feel the continued impression of them ; and your senses, even when locked up in sleep, are still haunted with the impure fancies, which were entertained when you were waking.

These are the dire marks of our desperately wicked hearts. Corrupt indeed are we, and become abominable : “ from the sole of the foot “ even unto the head, there is no soundness in “ us, but the whole is wounds and bruises and “ putrifying sores (*q*).” The more we are attentive to what hath passed in us, the more we shall discover this vile nature of ours, and feel the need of crying, “ Purge me with hyssop, that I may “ be clean ; wash me, that I may be whiter “ than snow (*r*).” Yea, and when we have begun to be made whole, “ this war in our members, this flesh that lusteth against the spirit (*s*),” will require all our labour, watchfulness and prayer, to “ keep it under and bring it into subjection (*t*).”

(*q*) Isai. i. 6.

(*r*) Psal. li. 7.

(*s*) Gal. v. 17.

(*t*) 1 Cor. ix. 27.

I shall conclude the subject with this one observation.

That the knowledge of this desperate wickedness of our hearts can only come from the Spirit of GOD, by his word enlightening our minds to understand our errors: for those who are evidently under the grossest influence of the foregoing evils, and, one should think, must be unavoidably convince of them, are insensible. The most worldly hearts are usually the most regardless of their wretched state: and they who are “following all uncleanness with greediness,” are led blindfold to their ruin, as the adulteress, “who eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, “I have done no wickedness (u).” But when the light of GOD’s truth shineth into our hearts, then our darkness appears; conviction of sin flashes like lightning on our consciences: and the more of this light we obtain, the more humbling are our reflections.

I have pitied the ignorance of a decent formalist, whose astonishment hath been raised when an experienced christian hath expressed his deep apprehensions of his own vileness; and the unawakened devotee hath suspected, from his

(u) Prov. xxx. 20.

confessions of the “remembrance of his sins being grievous to him, and the burden of them being really intolerable *,” that he must needs have been a peculiarly bad man in his time, and committed some atrocious wickedness: whereas the only difference between them is, that the one is enlightened to see, and quickened to a sensibility of the workings of natural corruption in his heart and actions; whilst, however more evident they appear in the conduct of the other, yet the “darkness hath blinded his eyes” that he cannot see them. And this it is that makes every true believer really write down under his own name, “Of sinners I am chief;” because the views he hath of his own fallen nature can be equalled by nothing which he discovers in the conduct of others.

If what you have heard hath this blessed humbling effect upon any of your hearts, my brethren, one great end of my speaking will be answered, and “the revelation of the gospel of the grace of God in JESUS CHRIST” will indeed appear precious unto you, concerning which I purpose to speak more fully in the ensuing Discourses.

* Confession in the Communion Service.

S E R M O N VI.

The Spirituality of GOD's Law.

GALATIANS iii. 10.

*Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things
which are written in the book of the law to do them.*

THE immortality of the Soul hath been a truth received in all nations and all ages. The light of the Gospel hath infallibly confirmed it. Man therefore is a creature, whose present existence must be considered as bearing a necessary connection with futurity; and his concerns in time trivial and insignificant, compared with his infinitely more important interests in eternity.

That he is a dependent creature, and, as endued with conscience, accountable to some superior Being for his conduct in this life, hath been also generally received, and cannot now be reasonably disputed; since Revelation hath laid this down among the most evident truths, That
“ GOD will judge the world in righteousness, by
“ that man whom he hath ordained; of which
“ he hath given assurance unto all men, in that
“ he

“ he hath raised him from the dead (x) :” that then the actions of men shall be laid in the balance of justice, and a suitable sentence follow the inquiry.

If man be thus accountable for his actions, it must arise from some rule of duty prescribed and known : what that rule is, as well as the sanctions annexed thereto, will deserve our attentive consideration.

We are in nothing more liable to mistake than concerning the law of GOD, and the penalties due to transgressors. Every man naturally desires to be happy ; and is willing to persuade himself he shall be so. If obedience to any rule is thereof necessary to procure him a title to this happiness, he would have it with as few restraints, and as much conformed as possible to his own inclinations, that so he might more easily and certainly secure the rewards of obedience. Hence all the vain labours to lower down the true standard of GOD's law, from perfection to *sincerity* of obedience ; and then to establish such *measures* of sincerity, as vary according to the corrupt taste of those, who thus exalt themselves into legislators.

(x) Acts xvii. 31.

On the other hand, the sanctions have suffered the same violence as the law. The dread of eternal misery is terrible indeed. Nature shrinks from it. The language therefore of holy scripture must be explained in some milder sense. Hence the *duration*, the *place*, the *intensity*, the *universality* of the torments of the wicked, have been respectively and strenuously controverted by those who had too much reason to apprehend the weight of them. Whilst from self-taught notions of God, and leaving the scriptures to wander after airy speculations, others have invented for themselves a wrathless Deity, either too indulgent to punish at all, or afflicting merely to purify, and with a view to bring the whole race of mankind finally and happily from the furnace, when their dross hath been consumed, and the divine principle purged and extricated from the intanglements with which flesh and sense have surrounded it.

The only way we can shun the rocks of error, is by keeping a constant eye upon the chart of divine truth. The GOD who alone hath a right to our service, hath fully revealed his mind and will relative to these matters in the scriptures, has prescribed the rule, and declared

clared the sanction. "To the word therefore
"and the testimony."

The Apostle, in the epistle from which the words in the text are taken, is writing to the church of the *Galatians*, on a matter then greatly controverted; namely, "whether it was necessary for the Gentile converts to be circumcised, and to keep the law (y)?" The judaizing teachers among them had sapped the very foundation of the believers hope, by setting up the law as a covenant of life, and pleading for personal obedience to it as the ground of their acceptance with God: whilst Saint *Paul* in every place resolutely set himself to oppose an opinion so dishonourable to his Master, so contradictory to the Gospel, and so destructive to mens souls. In this epistle and another to the *Romans*, he expressly and formally enters into the question, and confutes the pretences of his adversaries, from the consideration of the spirituality, extent and perfection of the law; the impossibility of keeping it in the present state of the human nature; and the design and end of the law, moral and ceremonial; not to furnish any man with a title to life from

(y) Acts xv. 1—6.

his own perfect obedience, but "to lead us to
 "CHRIST, that we might be justified by
 "faith (z)."

So far indeed from being capable of giving
 life, the law could not but condemn as many
 as trusted to it; since "as many as are of the
 "works of the law, are under the curse; as
 "it is written, Cursed is every one that con-
 "tinueth not in all things written in the book
 "of the law to do them (a)."

And this reasoning of the Apostle with the
 people of that day is left upon record "for
 "our admonition," that we like them might
 not "be turned aside from the hope of the
 "Gospel," to depend on any broken reed which
 can only run into and pierce the hand that leans
 upon it. With this view, I propose to open
 the words read to you, That when we see the
 perfection of obedience which GOD's law,
 the rule of our duty, indispensibly requires,
 and the tremendous curse which it denounces
 against every transgression, we may be the more
 solicitous to "fly from the sword of the avenger
 "to the city of refuge," the cross of CHRIST,
 "who hath redeemed us from the curse of the

(z) Gal. iii. 24.

(a) Gal. iii. 10.

"law,

“law, by being made a curse for us (b).”
In speaking to the words read at present, I shall endeavour to shew the following particulars :

- I. What law the Apostle here refers to.
- II. What are the demands of that law.
- III. The impossibility of our compliance therewith.

I. The law the Apostle here refers to, is the *moral law*. He declares it to be that law “which concluded Jews and Gentiles both under sin (c)” — that law, by which all the world was found guilty and stood condemned before GOD (d)” — that law, the offence against which produced *death* before *Moses's* days (e) — and that law, by obedience to which, wherever it could be found, life would be certainly attained (f). — These are characters which alone suit the moral law.

Some indeed refer all that the Apostle says to the ceremonial law, or at least to that dispensation under which the *Jews* were, considered purely as it was judaical ; and suppose the subject of this epistle to be merely a pri-

(b) Gal. iii. 13. (c) Rom. iii. 9. (d) Rom. iii. 19.

(e) Rom. v. 14. (f) Gal. iii. 21.

vate controversy in which the world at present is little, if any thing, concerned. But since it is evident, that the law in question is that which alike bound and condemned the whole human race, the matter in dispute touches the very nerves of the Gospel; namely, whether *faith* or *works* justify us before GOD; and we have full as much concern in the question as the *Galatians* themselves.

There was a law from the beginning which man was bound to obey. This was like its Author perfect. Coming from GOD it could not but be so. And it was to be suitably observed. He can receive from his creatures no service but such as becomes their dependence upon him; and that must be absolute and intire. This is the eternal and unalterable rule of duty. The traces of this obligation through man's corruption were become grievously obscured, yet in the worst and darkest ages "GOD" was not without a witness" in the conscience. Men at all times and in all places knew that they who did things contrary to the grand precepts of the law, *were worthy of death* (g). The *Jews* had one advantage over others:

(g) Rom. i. 32.

GOD committed to them his lively oracles. He wrote with his own finger on tables of stone this eternal law of obedience: whilst in typical institutions of his own appointment he shewed them the gracious method which he had provided for their deliverance from those transgressions that could not but ensue. The law never was designed to save them. It was given, that "sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful (b);" and then to be "a schoolmaster to lead them to CHRIST (i);" that they might turn their eyes from this law of works, which condemned them, to a gospel of grace, continually held forth in every bleeding victim. The moral law delivered to *Moses* on mount *Sinai* was not a new law, peculiarly framed for and appropriated to the *Jews*. It was the old commandment which had been from the beginning; a law by which all mankind was to be judged, and be justified or condemned, according to their obedience or transgression. The peculiar advantages they enjoyed by the law, were a clearer and deeper conviction of their impotency to keep it—their misery under the curse denounced—and fuller discove-

(b) Rom. vii. 13.

(i) Gal. iii. 24.

ries of God's gracious designs of relief from it in the promised seed.

When therefore the law is spoken of, we must not conceive that the *Mosaical* law, contained in the Ten Commandments, is another law distinct from the *moral*, by which *Jews* or *Gentiles* were otherwise equally bound. There never was but one moral law from GOD: there cannot be: it is unalterable, however in sundry times and divers manners the promulgation of it may be made. All men are and must be under it to the end of the world. GOD must cease to be, before his law can vary, or cease to bind mens consciences.

2. The demands of this law come next to be considered. And these are obedience in every view and instance absolute and complete; doing GOD's will on earth as it is done in heaven. "A continuance in all things written in the book of the law." Our rule of duty is perfect; nor may one jot or tittle of it be broken with impunity. "Give me thy heart (*k*)" is the first injunction; for "God requireth truth in the inward parts. (*l*)."

(*k*) Prov. xxiii. 26.

(*l*) Psal. lii. 6.

The *principle* from whence the service flows must be pure. This is essential to all obedience. It is the rectitude of the temper which constitutes the acceptableness of the service.

The *extent* too of our obedience must be as large as our rule. *All* GOD's commandments, the least as well as the greatest of them, demand our submission: and this with the highest intenseness of affection. "Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, and with all thy strength (*m*)."
Imperfection is transgression. If the least measure of love be wanting, the obedience under the law is not absolutely perfect. GOD will have an intire service. One defect as effectually destroys all title to life by the law as a thousand transgressions.

And the whole must be *perpetual*; continuance in all these things to do them, being the unalterable demand. The longest course of obedience, *once* interrupted, ceases directly to be a legal righteousness. The curse enters the moment that sin enters. A life of a thousand years spent like an Angel of GOD, would, according to the covenant of *works*, utterly forfeit the re-

(*m*) Matt. xxii. 37.

ward, if but in the dying moments a vain thought or an idle word escaped us. The law is inexorable: "The man that doth those things, " he and he only shall live by them (n)." It makes no provision for failure: "The wages of sin, of every sin, is death (o)." "If indeed " there had been a law which could have given " life, verily righteousness should have been by " this law (p)." Such obedience, as above described, would have given a legal claim to life: we should have stood before GOD "righteous, " as he is righteous." The favour of GOD, not by grace, but by works, would have been necessarily connected with this: God must have been delighted with his own image. But,

3. No man hath ever thus conformed to the rule of duty. "The scripture hath concluded " all under sin (q)." The law could not be fulfilled through the weakness of the flesh; "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of GOD (r)." The moment any person truly begins to consider his state, and to bring forth his heart and life before the law of this holy LORD GOD, conviction must seal up his lips

(n) Rom. x. 5.

(o) Rom. vi. 23.

(p) Gal. iii. 21.

(q) Gal. iii. 22.

(r) Rom. iii. 23.

in silence. Many indeed there are, whose ignorance and unhumbled pride lead them to claim the reward of obedience : and many more hope to deserve it before they die, though the one and the other are under the most fatal delusion. But this will be disputed by the *good* liver, as they think themselves, who trust that they are righteous. It may not therefore be amiss to manifest a little more explicitly the fact of disobedience, and shew you, that so far from keeping ALL the *commandments in the highest measure continually*, you have never for one day truly kept any of the commandments in the *lowest* measure : but having been a transgressor from the womb, you continue so to this hour.

I have indeed already at large laid open to you the “ carnal mind which is enmity against “ GOD ; and shewn you that it neither is subject to the law of GOD, nor indeed can “ be (s).” I have proved that every living soul is thus carnal : and as a consequence thereof, that he is essentially a sinner, wanting that *principle*, without which there can be no obedience.

This alone might be sufficient ; but because the matter is of such importance, I pass on to

(s) Rom. viii. 7.

a review of our evident transgressions against the law of God, in order more fully to support the charge just laid against us. Though it may startle some to be accused of idolatry, profaneness, sabbath-breaking, murder, adultery, theft and perjury; it is a fact, that you are guilty of all. I might indeed plead your own petitions for mercy, after the rehearsal of each Commandment *, and the acknowledgments you are continually making to the same purpose in many other places of our liturgy: for surely you are not allowing yourselves thus deliberately, solemnly and repeatedly to utter what you deem only so many falsehoods. But I would rather wave this proof, to enter more intimately into the subject, and shew you the ground of such acknowledgments.

It must be observed that "the law of God" is spiritual (t)." Our SAVIOUR'S comment (u) declares how far it reaches. Each command reaches not only to the outward acts forbidden or enjoined, but to the corresponding inward thoughts and intentions.

* See *Rubric* before the Commandments in the Communion Service.

(t) Rom. vii. 14.

(u) Mat. v. vi. vii.

The law begins with the *object* of worship, and the nature of it; reveals the true GOD, and how he must be served.

GOD alone must be the object of our worship. We are called upon to have *no other*. And to worship him, is to honour him with that supreme regard, that faith and fear and love, which we may not give to any other. Now who hath thus sanctified the LORD GOD in his heart? What have we been doing but setting up against him so many idols of jealousy? It matters not whether we have made to us "gods of wood and stone, which are no gods;" or put in the fine gold, our confidence: whether we have worshipped at the shrine of a deceased or perhaps imaginary *Venus*, or supremely fixed our affections upon some living object; whether we have cried "*Baal*, help us;" or fled to creature-dependences: whether we have with the *Americans* sacrificed to devils, or feared the faces of men: wherever or in whatever we have *loved, feared and trusted* upon the creature more than the *Creator*, there we have had other gods beside him.

As GOD alone must be worshipped, the nature of that worship next claims our attention. He must be worshipped in spirit and in truth;

and in ways only of his own appointment. We are equally guilty of idolatry in worshipping the true GOD after a wrong manner, as if we worshipped an Idol. When the *Israelites* "proclaimed a feast unto the LORD" before the golden calf, they were as much idolaters as when "they erected the tabernacle of *Moloch*, and the star of their god *Remphan*." Images with us are no longer the mediums of worship. I will suppose you never bowed to them, nor have been tempted to do so; but are you therefore wholly free from idolatry? Can we find no idolaters but in the deserts of *Afric*, among those who prostrate themselves before the rising moon? or must we travel to the distant East to behold the bending votaries of a *Chinese* pagod? Are they alone in this respect culpable, who in the country of grossly idolatrous *Romanism* bow the knee to a god which the priest hath made, or adore the dead bones of a man? Alas! I fear there is not a protestant church in the world where as great idolatry almost is not in the worshippers. Not to mention the misconceptions which are usually entertained of GOD, and that aptness to frame corporeal ideas of the infinitely incomprehensible nature: I would only beg you to observe

observe the temper and manner in which GOD's worship is performed among us; and you will needs confess, that it better suits a dumb idol, that "having eyes seeth not, and having ears "heareth not." than the all-seeing, heart searching JEHOVAH. Some indeed there are worse than idolaters: they worshipped some god, though a false one; but your neglect of GOD's worship in public—in your families—and in private—testifies with what contempt you treat the great GOD and SAVIOUR, "in "whom you live, and move, and have your "being (x)." You have risen up, and he hath sustained you; you have laid down in peace, because he has preserved you, but hath he seen a bended knee, a grateful acknowledgement of his care, or a petition for its continuance? Not a word. You have left him "far above out of your sight;" you "restrain prayer before him (y)." Is he a GOD, or is he not, that you dare treat him with such neglect?

But you daily worship him. How? "In "spirit and in truth?" What, when so many vain thoughts, so many worldly thoughts, so

(x) Acts xvii. 28.

(y) Job xv. 4.

many wicked thoughts, lodge within you? Is this a worship in spirit and in truth? What, when you are so unsuitably affected with his glory, so irreverent, cold, unmeaning and hypocritical, "drawing near to him with your lips, when your heart is far from him (z)?" Is this the worship he demands? Go wait upon the meanest person of whom you would ask a favour; you dare not treat them, as you have many a time treated the Eternal Majesty.

You are commanded to "sanctify that great and terrible name, The LORD thy GOD (a)." But how often hath this tremendous name been in your mouth vainly, wantonly, thoughtlessly, profanely, or passionately? Were the charge only brought against you for your mentioning it so often in your prayers, when your heart hath felt no awe of his presence and glory, you would see a catalogue of sins that would increase beyond the number of the hairs of your head.

Your sabbaths have been greatly polluted. That holy day hath been sometimes a burden to you. "You have said, When will it be gone (b)?" Yea, you have not waited for

(z) *Isai. xxix. 13. Matt. xv. 8.*(a) *Isai. viii. 13.*(b) *Amos vii. 5.*

its end. You have thought your own thoughts, "spoke your own words, and done your own pleasure in it (c)." You have neglected the public worship often on the most frivolous pretexts. You have attended, but without any reverential sense of him whose throne is in heaven, and his footstool the earth. You have gone away, but not in a sabbatical temper. Indulgence, idleness, dress, visitings or worse, have profaned that perhaps more than common days. Your man-servant or maid-servant have been detained from the service of God: you have sacrilegiously converted God's right in them on that day to your own secular purposes.

Upon these facts I appeal to your respective consciences, who is guiltless in any instance of the breach of his duty towards God? Nor shall we be able to give a better account of our obedience to the duties of the second table.

The proud and naturally independent heart of man will not, as hath been shewn before, easily bend to "give honour to whom honour is due (d)." Contempt of authority, dislike of restraint,—self-exaltation over our equals, and haughtiness to-

(c) Isai. lviii. 13.

(d) Rom. xiii. 7.

wards inferiors, have in innumerable instances appeared.

But *murder* you never committed, no not in thought. Do not be too confident : somebody perhaps is now alive, whom you have wished to be dead; or some one hath died, whose death rejoiced you. Was not this Murder, think you ? Suppose you have not proceeded to the act of imbruing your hand in innocent blood (yet perhaps you may have contributed to *this*, and been a party, if not a principal many ways in bringing on the untimely end), have you never been "angry without a cause ?" Never been heated to say, "Raca, or thou fool ?" Never "hated your brother ?" He who knows best his own commands, expressly charges these things to the account of *murder* (e)."

Adultery also you will not confess. Why ? Because you were never *taken*, as the woman brought to our blessed LORD, "in the very "act (f)." What of that ? Say you have been really innocent of the grosser crime, have you never "looked upon a woman to lust after ?" Hath your hand, your tongue, your eye, never betrayed the unhallowed passion ? Hath not your heart entertained contrivances to effect your

(e) Matt. v. 22. 1 John iii. 15.

(f) John viii. 4.

gratification ? or indulged desires of doing it, it in your power ? Then you have certainly been an *Adulterer* (g). Add the instances noted before under the temper of impurity, and tell me if you can say, "I am pure from this sin ?"

It is ignominious to be a *Thief*: you will not acknowledge yourself to be subject to that imputation. But then hath not pride rather than duty kept you within bounds ? And hath not self often passed the line of justice, and adjudged to you what was not properly your own ? Have you always "done unto others as you would in a change of circumstances have expected from them ?" The love of gain, hath it not often blinded your eyes, and covetousness laid a bias on your integrity ? In your dealings, labour, service, or whatever your respective employments may have been, when you begin to place things in the true point of view, you will see how swerving your walk hath been from the rule of right. Unjust gains, exorbitant profits, faulty or eye-service, impositions in merchandise, advantages taken of others easiness, ignorance or necessities, with a thousand means which worldly wisdom hath devised to carry on its grand design

(g) Matt. v. 21, 22.

of getting and thriving, testify the thief in the heart. Besides the numberless acts of injustice to God, the King, and the necessitous, which have not, it may be, ever come under your own cognisance or consideration, or been a subject of the least concern.

I will suppose you never to have *perjured* yourself before a magistrate, nor to have suborned others, but you may be “a false witness against your neighbour” notwithstanding. The tongue that never told a lie, would be a wonder which this world never produced: he only excepted “in whose mouth there was no guile (b)” The designing lie, the pernicious, the exculpativè, the marvelous, or the jocular, hath often I fear, found a place in all our conversations. Who is wholly guiltless of slander, passing rash judgment upon others, of misrepresentation or of misreport? “The tongue is a world of iniquity (i).” He would be a “perfect man indeed: who could bridle it (k).”

The concupiscence forbidden in the last place goes to the bottom of the heart, reaching the very first motions of sinful inclination towards the things of others. If we have offended in the

(b) 1 Pet. ii. 22.

(i) James iii. 6.

(k) James iii. 2.

rest but little, we shall be found herein to have offended much. For who hath not been conscious to numberless motions of concupiscence, which have scarce been formed into desire, and have never been brought into act?

These are the "transgressions and disobedience," which are threatned with "a just recompence of reward (1)." The rule is before you. Try your conduct; can it stand this test? Guilty or Not Guilty, is the question. Who must not lay their hand upon their mouth? We have sinned. The fact is undeniable. Indeed, what else have we done but sinned! What one of the commandments have we kept? And so far from *continuance in them all*, what one day, yea, what an hour of our lives ever passed, without some deviation from them? What then can the law do? It must condemn us; it must "conclude all under sin, and the sentence of death eternal pass upon them, forasmuch as all have sinned (2)." But is every man under this state of condemnation? Yes: "The whole world is guilty before God (3)." Is there then no plea? Yes, *Guilty*. But can we not escape the curse? No, not by the law. Must.

(1) Heb. ii. 2. (2) Gal. iii. 12. Röm. v. 12. (3) Röm. iii. 19.

we then lie down despairing? Certainly; for any thing we can do to help ourselves. "The law is the ministration of death (o)." It is our only and eternal rule of duty, and we must keep it or perish, for any relief we can obtain from ourselves. I rest here to intimate.

First, The deplorable state of fallen man under a covenant of works. He is rolling up a stone which is above his strength, and continually returns and crushes him. "By the law is the knowledge of sin (p)." Yea, "the strength of sin is the law (q)." And yet we are so strangely wedded to it, that we are continuing our impotent attempts to keep it, though the seamless garment of righteousness once rent can never be renewed by us, so as to cover our nakedness. This was the old leaven the devil infused, and it is still working to make man seek his salvation by the works of the law. He knows his power is never so triumphant, and his captive so secure, as when this is the case. It was, I doubt not, on this very account that our LORD said, that "publicans and harlots entered into the kingdom of heaven," whilst the apparent "children of the kingdom," the devout, regular, self-justifying

(o) 2 Cor. iii. 7. (p) Rom. iii. 20. (q) 1 Cor. xv. 56.

depends on the exactness of their conformity to the rule of their duty, "were cast out (r)." Let us know ourselves, and lie down under our condemnation. When we are brought to feel our misery, and reduced to self-despair, we are at the gate of mercy,

Secondly, What an act of astonishing grace it is, that God hath made another covenant with us, "established on better promises (s);" wherein whilst the law is magnified by the obedience unto death of God's own Son, pardon and grace are purchased, and eternal redemption secured to us from all the destructive evils which a broken law denounces. A covenant of grace will be indeed "as fountains of waters, and streams from Lebanon," to every soul that sees his natural obligations, and his violation of them. I would keep this covenant ever in our view; and hope shortly to unfold the sovereignty, fulness, freedom and glory of the Divine Grace therein manifested.

(r) Matt. xxi. 31—viii. 12.

(s) Heb. viii. 6.

S E R M O N VII.

The Penalty of Disobedience.

GALATIANS iii. 10.

Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

THE sanctions of the divine law succeed in order to the law itself. Unless enforced by penalties, it would be destitute of weight, authority and influence. The great Legislator hath therefore solemnly denounced them.—His power is all-sufficient to execute them.—His holiness requires it.—His truth obliges him.

The account given of the rule of our obedience is such as may justly alarm us. Our transgressions of it are numberless, great and aggravated. The law hath found us guilty. Justice must take its course. “Every transgression and disobedience must receive a just recompence of reward: Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

There

There is nothing we are more averse to receive than GOD's declared determination to punish sin. As every man wishes for happiness, he would quiet his fears with promises of peace, though GOD hath said, "There is no peace (t)."^(t) The curse of GOD grates harsh thunder in a sinner's ears. He turns away from it. He would soften the tone of vengeance. He would make a new Deity, all mercy, to overlook the dishonour cast upon his holy law, and out of complaisance to him, sully the beauty of his holiness, and falsify his truth. But "let GOD be true, and every man a liar (u)."^(u) He hath spoken, and "who shall disannul it? He is in one mind, and who shall turn him back (x)?"^(x) Better, far better, is it for us to bow at presents before his unchangeable law, and trembling at the sanction, fly to the only door of hope, than, trusting on lying vanities, be covered with confusion, "when the devouring storm shall come, and sweep away every refuge, of lies (y):"^(y) when he shall rain upon the ungodly, snares, fire and brimstone, storm

(t) Isai. xlviii. 22.

(u) Rom. iii. 4.

(x) Isai. xiv. 27. Job xxiii. 13.

(y) Isai. xxviii. 17.

" and

‘ and tempest, this shall be their portion to
“ drink (z).”

I am about to open to you, my brethern,
the curse and “wrath of GOD revealed” against
“all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of
“men (a):” a subject in which we are most
awfully concerned; forasmuch as this un-
righteousness is found in every soul of us;
before GOD’s bar can “no man living be
“justified (b).” May the terror of GOD’s
judgments force us to take refuge in the arms
of HIS Grace, under the shadow of whose
wings we may be safe; where no deluge of
wrath, no devouring storm, no curse can reach
us.

I shall endeavour to shew,

I. That in the natural course of things the
curse of GOD’s broken law must fall
upon every sinner’s head.

II. The dreadfulfulness of that curse: and

III. Add a word of Application.

I. In the primary natural course of things
the curse of a broken law must fall upon every
sinners head. That we are all sinners is proved.
As sinners, wrath is due to us, and pronounced

(z) Psal. xi. 6:

(a) Rom. i. 18.

(b) Psal. cxlii. 2.

against us. Can we escape it, is the question. By no powers of our own is it possible: sin once committed cannot be undone. By two ways men usually seek to escape the wages of sin. "By sorrow for the past, and doing "better for the time to come." But neither of these can heal the breach.

(1.) *Sorrow* for past offences will not cancel the obligation to suffer the punishment of transgression. This is the first *refuge of lies* to which proud man betakes himself. But what will this avail? Will fountains of tears, day and night, wash out the stains from our conscience, or blot out our sin from GOD's book? They can no more stop the course of GOD's law than the cries of the criminal who is convicted for murder, or the tears of the debtor who is arrested for his extravagancies, can stay the execution of human justice. Besides, what is the cause of most of this sorrow? Is it any thing more than a selfish fear of deserved punishment? And can this be any compensation for the dishonour shewn to GOD's laws? But be it what it will, the divine law knows no language, but "pay me what thou owest;" and in default thereof, delivers over to the tormentors. GOD's word is, "The soul that sinneth,

"neth, it shall die (c)." Every sinner is a convict in law. The sentence only remains to be passed, and then execution will be made upon every attainted soul.

But, (2.) We generally place greater hopes on our doing better for *the time to come*. This usually goes by the name of *true repentance*; a little sorrow for the past, and a good resolution for the future: but alas! this is as vain and fruitless as the other.

Suppose yourself as good as your word. Suppose you really could do what you say, could turn from every evil way, and live henceforth as pure as an angel: Would that secure you? Alas! your present and future obedience would be no more than the law required. You would be "an unprofitable servant, doing no more than was your duty to do (d)." You would have nothing over. Your past offence must remain as before: and it must therefore render all your subsequent services in vain. You would not, it is true, be condemned for present iniquity; but what would that avail, if still you must answer for the past? Tell your creditor, you are determined to run no more

(c) Ezek. xviii. 4.

(d) Luke xvii. 10.

in arrear, will he give you a receipt in full on that condition? You see then, even on this supposition, sin once committed becomes indelible by you.

But the supposition you can thus do better, and the promise of doing so, are chimerical. Were you to hear a man, who after repeated essays never yet was able to finish one wheel or part of one, engaging to complete some grand and curious machine, on any penalty which might be inflicted; I know not whether you would blame most his ignorance or his arrogance: yet is it not so great as yours, who resolve upon perfect obedience, after such frequent experience of inability to keep one of GOD's commandments. Until you can cease to be a corrupted creature, you cannot cease to transgress; and if so, what, I pray you, can your future conduct be but a sequel to the past, adding sin unto sin? And will a corrupt conversation now atone for the same before?

But will not both these together, *sorrow* for the past, and *sincere* though imperfect *obedience* for future, procure my acceptance with GOD? Will he not be pleased if I do my best? I answer, You neither do the best you can, and that best is bad also.

You.

You do not the *best* you can. Who will dare to say that he doth really keep every one of GOD's commandments to the uttermost of what he might have done? Let any man but reflect upon his conduct one day, and see whether he hath not done things which he ought and might not have done; and left undone what he might have accomplished, for the glory of GOD and for the good of his neighbour. We could no more stand on the plea of doing our *best*, than of obeying in *perfection*.

But after we had really done our best, we should only have increased our condemnation: for what is our best, our very righteousnesses? Are they capable of enduring the severity of GOD's Judgments? Can they appear before the holy law of GOD? Will they challenge the rewards of obedience? So far from it, that the very iniquity of our holiest things must have one to bear it, or we are undone. And why? Because the corruption of our nature defileth all we do. The best deeds of the natural man are wholly unclean, have not a spark of spiritual goodness in them. "For who can bring
" a clean thing out of an unclean (e)!"

(e) Job xiv. 4.

Whilst the heart of a renewed man being so but in part, enough of defilement mixes with his best duties, to render them incapable of bearing the scrutiny of the law of God*.

The consequence then is, that if we stand on the footing of our own obedience to the rule of our duty, we fall inevitably under the curse; nor can any method we can devise or make use of, enable us to escape its execution. We must suffer or fulfil the law. The latter is impossible, therefore the former must be our portion. Which leads me,

II. To consider what is the import of the threatening declared against the transgressor, or the dreadfulneſs of the curse denounced against sin. The security of sinners arises from a disbelief or misapprehension of the real wages of sin. Nor is there a soul who is saved from the curse of the law, but would look upon sin in a more hateful light, if he really and fully apprehended the wrath of God revealed against it.

I will wave at this time the numberless evils that are the present wages of sin; though these might fill volumes. The pains, the diseases, the calamities, the afflictions, the misery and

* See Article XII. and XIII.

distresses,

distresses, which in this present world are the portion of the sinner; and death itself, the last and most dreaded of all. We may be assured from what we already see and feel, that "it is a fearful thing indeed to fall into the hands of the living GOD (f)." If these are but "the beginning of sorrows," what must the fulness and completion of them be?

I would pause a moment, that solemn awe may impress our consciences, when we are entering on a subject so tremendous. You and I, my brethren, are most deeply and intimately concerned in it. We are the sinners to whom the wages of sin is due. If one transgression only deserves the wrath of GOD; what must be the case when sinners have filled up the measure of their iniquities, and as the sand of the sea their transgressions are numberless? O! for a heart of flesh to tremble for others and for ourselves!

If any scorers hear or peruse these lines, I shall expect to be called uncharitable, or a melancholy enthusiast, and they may feel their hearts provoked "to kick against the pricks." But, sinner, know that these are the true sayings of GOD. Thou must deny his word before thou

(f) Heb. x. 31.

canst reject these terrors. They are now declared with the kindest intention to thy soul, to press thee to “fly from the wrath to come.” And fly thou must, or perish in the flames. O that thou mightest feel, before it is too late to flee! and would to God that every reader may hasten their pace to the city of refuge, lest the storm overtake them!

“God will visit for these things.” He hath solemnly warned us that sin shall not go unpunished. And a punishment he hath assigned adequate to its high demerit.

God himself will execute judgment on the ungodly. “And who can stand when he is angry? If his wrath be kindled, yea, but for a moment, who may abide it (g)? He is a consuming fire,” able to punish as well as to bless to the uttermost. And what a fearful state must that be, when he arises to vindicate the honour of his broken law, and to pour out the vials of “indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul that doth evil (h)?”

The scripture hath briefly informed us concerning the nature, place and endurance of the

(f) Heb. x. 31. Psal. lxxvi. 7.—il. 12. Nahum i. 6.

(h) Rom. ii. 9.

curse of sin. But how poor and insufficient are words to convey adequate ideas of the wrath of an avenging God ! Who but they that feel can tell the fierceness of the fire, or the intolerableness of the pains ? And yet the very sound is enough to make the ears of every one that heareth it to tingle.

Hell is the dreadful habitation. With Devils and damned spirits must be thy eternal abode, O sinner ! The chains of darkness surround them. They dwell in the shadow of death. " A furnace of unquenchable fire ; a lake which burneth with sulphur ; a stream of living flames fed by the breath of the Almighty (i)." These are the dreadful images under which God's word describes to us the misery of the damned.

The nature of the torments inflicted on them is, according to our nature, twofold. He that taketh vengeance, punisheth " soul and body in hell (k)."

The soul in every faculty will feel the tormenting plague. The *Curse* of God will fasten upon it, and it will be " a worm that never dies." Every reflection on the past will be like a scorpion's sting ; every prospect of the future

(i) *Isai.* xxx. 33.(k) *Matt.* x. 28.

covered with black impenetrable despair. The consciousness of the immediate displeasure of the eternal GOD, will be "a poisoned arrow that "drinketh up the spirit;" and the storms of wrath continually apprehended will fill the soul with terrors unspeakable: whilst all the furious passions let loose upon the poor distracted sinner anger, malice, impatience, rage, like so many boisterous winds upon the sea, contend and toss the soul from one abyss of woe unto another.

The body, a principal in sin, will also share in the curse: weltring in flames; consuming, yet unconsumed; tormented, without "one "drop of water to cool the raging fire (1)." For that the fire is real, and the *body* acted upon by it, is certain, from the repeated declarations of God's word, that the *body* shall be cast into Hell where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Nor need it be thought incredible, that he who raises the body, should be able to preserve it unconsumed in such a kind of suffering. That our bodies will be spiritual is certain; but he that inflicts the punishment can prepare a fire, whose subtilty shall affect not our natures only, but also the angelical. And I

(1) Luke xvi. 24.

doubt not but "the fire prepared for the devil and " his angels," to which the accursed sinner will be condemned, will torment them as well as him.

Moreover, that the anguish will be intolerable as eternal, fully appears from those dismal expressions of it, which fill the horrid caverns of *Tophet*. There weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, impotent blasphemies, bitter reviling; and raging of self-tormenting despair are heard on every side. " Filled with the fury of the LORD, " as a wild bull in the net (*m*)," they roar out in their pangs; and shriek echoes to shriek around. Then shall the most dreaded of all present evils be courted as a friend; " men shall seek death, " and shall not find it. They shall desire to " die, and death shall flee from them (*n*). " O fearful state of wretchedness, where the very arms of death are pleasant! With what horror should we regard sin of every kind, that brings body and soul to such intolerable woe!

No mitigation of the torment, or momentary respite, is either known or hoped for. Every object that could sooth the pains is removed. The voice of mirth, the songs of vanity, the business,

(*m*) *Isai. li. 20.*

(*n*) *Rev. ix. 6*

the companions, the amusements, that often here lulled to sleep the awakened conscience, are no more found. Sinners are left naked to their sorrows ; and these roll on like billow upon billow without ceasing : “ They have no rest day “ nor night (o) : ” no hope of it. Not a gleam of that sweet comforter ever breaks through their utter darkness. Despair, the bitterness of Hell itself, fixes here. The Hell of Hells is this, that whilst the unchangeable GOD endures what the sinner is, he must for *ever* be. He cannot cease to hate sin, nor hating to punish it.

Eternity is the only measure of suffering the wages of sin. Could any message reach the damned, that after millions of ages, more than are drops in the ocean, sands on the shore, stars in the firmament, atoms in the universe, or numbers in calculation, that then their torment should cease ; surely they would in their chains leap for joy, and endure because there was hope in the end. But alas ! when all these ages shall be past, their torments are as new as ever ; it is still “ but the beginning of sorrows.” What an alarming thought ! when one spark from the furnace, one pang of remorse is now so painful,

(o) Rev. xiv. 11.

so grievous; what must eternity be in never-ending torment!

No marvel the sinner's heart rises against so fearful an expectation, and fain would soften down and explain away the duration of eternal misery: but it stands on the firm basis of eternal truth. We must believe this, or believe nothing: All God's word sinks with it.

We may admit, indeed, that the word *for ever* implies sometimes in scripture only a limited duration, which is always determined by the nature of the subject, or by something connected immediately with it: but in the present case it is incapable of such a sense. The punishment of the sinner is expressed as of the same duration as the "life of the righteous (*p*)."
The torments of wicked men are declared to be as enduring as those of the devils themselves; and I conceive it could never be said of any sinner, "it was good for him never to have been born (*q*);" if after any continuance of suffering, there should finally remain for him an eternity of bliss; seeing all the possible computations of time vanish into nothing, when placed against *eternity*, and are lost as a drop in the ocean. Nor is there the

(*p*) Matt. xxv. 46.

(*q*) Mark xiv. 21.

least intimation given throughout the whole book of GOD, that the wages of sin shall ever be paid but by the infliction and continuance of the punishment.

Such is the curse of GOD revealed against sin. Would GOD it might so deeply affect our hearts, as really to beget in us the most awakened concern about our sins ! For which end,

3. I shall endeavour to enforce the matter still farther upon every man's conscience for our conviction and humiliation.

First, Tell me daring sinner, can thy heart endure, and thy hands be strong, when GOD shall thus deal with thee ! What rock or mountain shall cover thee from this curse of sin, when the great day of his wrath is come ? Perhaps thou hast often despised the terrors of the LORD, and hast been of those "fools who make a mock "at sin (r) ;" but know assuredly thy shadow, when the sun shines on thee, doth not follow thee so close as the curse of GOD perpetually doth. It is upon the rising up and lying down, going out and coming in ; and thou art living, thou art dying under it : and dying, it may be, utterly unconcerned. Hadst thou been by when

(r) Prov. xiv. 9.

Shadrach and his brethren were cast into the burning fiery furnace, would not the sight have dismayed thee? Hadst thou had the power to rescue them, what would not humanity have caused thee to attempt? Yet they were safe in the protection of their God. If the fire had not been restrained, their bodies only for a moment could endure the pain, and then an eternity of bliss had received them. But thou art on the brink of a fiercer furnace of fire; and God thy enemy, and an eternity of misery before thee; and art thou not concerned about thine own life, thy eternal life? What infatuation hath seized thee, that thou art so insensible? Canst thou contend with the Almighty JEHOVAH! "Hast thou an arm like God (s)?" Canst thou resist his determinations, or elude his judgment? Dost thou fear when the forked lightning's glare flashes into thy chamber, or tremble when the thunder of God's power bursts from the cloud, and rocks the ground? And how canst thou then look forward, so unconcerned, to that dread hour when the judge "shall be revealed in flaming fire (t);" when the heavens shall "be wrapped together as a scroll, and the elements

(s) Job xl. 3.

(t) 2 Thess. i 97, 8.

" melt

“melt with fervent heat (u);” the earth be shook from its foundations, and be dissolved; and all created nature sink around thee in one promiscuous ruin?

Or wilt thou make him a liar, and his speech of none effect? “Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good (x)?” To indulge thee in thy sins, will he dishonour his faithfulness, forfeit his justice, and deny himself? Surely “the hope of the sinner is as the spider’s web (z).” But are not these, say you, the phantoms which priestcraft hath invented to over-awe the minds of the superstitious? No, sinner: thou wilt find them dreadful realities; too true for thee; and if not believed in time, thou must feel what now thou affectest to despise. But the curse delays. The up-lifted arm of vengeance is suspended. The collected wrath yet waits a moment. The warning voice is heard. Sinner, arise, tremble; look upwards. See with an eye of faith that sign, that bloody sign. Pardon and peace await thee beneath the banner of the cross. O that thy heart felt thy sin

(u) Isai. xxxiv. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 10.

(x) Numb. xxiii. 19.

(z) Job viii. 14.

and ruin inevitable ! and fought, whilst yet he might be found, that JESUS who can alone deliver from the wrath to come ! Under his shadow thou mayst be safe. He will interpose his own body between thee and the curse of an offended GOD : and thus thou mayst yet be hid in the day of the LORD's fierce anger. His deep wounds afford a safe retreat : his heart is opened for thee, a covert from the impending storm. O that under his wings thou mayst be gathered before the trump of judgment awakes, and time is no longer !

Secondly, Beware of seeking help from the destroyer. "The strength of sin is the law (a)." Seek not to this for healing. More perish not by negligence than by error. We naturally seek to fly from the curse by flying to the law. Pride ever weds us to it. We think still to make our foe our friend : but ever must the curse remain, whilst by the works of the law we seek acceptance with GOD : yea, never so surely remain as when we fancy it is removed thereby. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves (b)." If we say, "by works of righteousness which I have done,"

(a) 1 Cor. xv. 56.

(b) 1 John i. 8.

I shall be saved, verily we have "a lie in our
"right hand." We must be dead to the law.
We have not kept it. We cannot keep it. We
are cursed by it. We are undone for ever. We
must know ourselves to be so. We must feel
ourselves ungodly. We must be sensible that
we have no strength to be otherwise. We must
lie down, and say that we have sinned. We
must despair for ever of ourselves. One sin
brings us to this state. But whose sins are not
innumerable? Beware of all dependence, then,
on your own doings. Your sorrow, your
amendment, your promises, your endeavours,
your sincerity, or whatever else; these cannot
save you. They must be utterly renounced;
they are incapable of removing your guilt, or
obtaining GOD's favour. Your case for any
thing you can do is helpless and hopeless; to
see it to be so is the very way to help and hope.
For then,

Thirdly, There is deliverance at hand. The
lost and the desperate need never perish for
want of help. The SON of GOD is come on
purpose to seek them. "He hath redeemed
"us from the curse of the law, by being
"made a curse for us (c)." What we could

(c) Gal. iii. 13.

never do he hath done for us. He hath become the sinner's surety. The law hath been put in force against him. He hath stood trial in our name and character. "He hath taken away sin by the sacrifice of himself (d)." Sin is everlastingly "condemned in the flesh (e)," by the sufferings of the SON OF GOD. The law hath no demands upon CHRIST. He died for sin once. The curse is endured. "There is no condemnation to them that are in CHRIST JESUS (f);" for he is risen again; it is plain thereby he hath obtained a legal discharge. Death hath no more dominion over him, for he hath made an end of sin: all is finished; What a glorious hope is this! A door of mercy is opened for sinners! With what eagerness should we strive to enter! Guilt is confessed; the law hath decided; the executioner is at our heels. O! blessed JESUS, hear, help, save us, dying sinners! we fly to thee, for besides thee there is none to help! Open to us; LORD, open to us the arms once nailed to a tree: open thy heart once pierced for us. Hide us in the cleft of this rock! then shall we at a distance only hear the thunders roll,

(d) Heb. ix. 26.

(e) Rom. viii. 3.

(f) Rom. viii. 1.

safe from the fear of evil; where no law reaches, no wrath descends, no curse can seize the helpless criminal; but pardon, peace, redemption, glory, are the blessings freely bestowed upon the chief of sinners!

S E R M O N VIII.

Redemption by JESUS CHRIST.

GALATIANS iii. 13.

CHRIST *hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.*

WITH men, who affect to be “wise
“above what is written,” the Gospel
of JESUS must expect an unfavourable reception. At carnal reason’s tribunal, truths, because incomprehensible, are counted absurd; and it is sufficient to stamp them as folly, because they cannot be fully understood. Yet such are the grand truths of christianity: too deep for this shallow line to fathom; and simply resolvable into the authority and veracity of

H 6

him

him who hath revealed them. "Whoever
 "therefore will be truly wise, must become a
 "fool that he may be wise (g)."

That the eternal GOD should stoop to be incarnate; that he, whom the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain, should be incarnate in the womb of a Virgin; that he, "who bindeth the deep in swaddling bands (b)," should himself be wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger; that he, who is the ancient of days, should be born an infant; that he, who is "the everlasting Father," should be a Virgin's child; that he, who is in himself "exalted above all blessing and praise," should become "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" that he, whose nature is impassive, should agonize in the garden and bleed under the scourge; that he, "who only hath immortality," should "become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;" that he, who is the most High and most Holy, should be made an *accursed* thing, suffering as the vilest of malefactors, and the most infamous of mankind: these are mysteries after which Reason gropes in vain, whilst Faith as-

(g) 1 Cor. iii. 18.

(b) Job xxxviii. 9.

sents, admires and adores ; mysteries, which to dispute were to disbelieve, and to disbelieve is to be undone : for “ he that believeth not shall be damned (i).”

The arguments proposed in the foregoing Discourses, have, I trust, served to convince as many as have seriously weighed their force that our state at present, by nature and practice, is desperate ; that we are corrupt in our original, sinful in all our ways, incapable of helping ourselves, and concluded under the curse, the wages of sin. “ Wretched man that I am,” must every soul needs cry, “ Who shall deliver me from the body of this death (k) ?” And the answer to this question is the highest glory of the Gospel : “ CHRIST hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, “ being made a curse for us.”

This delightful subject, my brethren, it is always the joy of my heart to set before you. It is the foundation of all my own happiness ; it must be the basis of yours, if ever you would be happy. Here alone we can truly find deliverance from our fears, peace from the accusations of conscience, comfort in death

(i) Mark xvi. 16.

(k) Rom. vii. 24.

and after death life everlasting. If we think we have any of these on any other grounds, the thought is at present delusive, and in the issue will be fatal. O that God would assist me worthily to speak of the revelation of his grace in JESUS CHRIST, and to shew the fulness that is in him ! The words read will afford these three considerations :

- I. The person who hath redeemed us,
CHRIST.
- II. The manner in which he redeemed us,
by being made a curse for us.
- III. The benefits which we receive by his
redemption of us.

I. The person who hath redeemed us is CHRIST. The comfort and relief of the sinner depends on the all-sufficiency of the Redeemer : the all-sufficiency of the Redeemer must arise from his qualifications for the work he undertakes. CHRIST is thus all-sufficient from the dignity of his divine, and the excellence of his human nature. He is both " God " and man, very God and very man ; and yet " not two, but one CHRIST *."

* Athanasian Creed.

First,

First, Our Redeemer is *very* GOD. This is the corner-stone of our salvation, If CHRIST be not *very* GOD, “our hopes are vain, we “are yet in our sins.” This however is opposed by many, who deny the “LORD that “bought them.” They blaspheme that holy name whereby we are called; degrade the incarnate JEHOVAH to a dependant and inferior Deity, and some to a mere man. They thus “live without the true GOD in the world (1);” by such denial of the faith they raze the foundations of christianity, though they pretend to espouse it, and are worse than the open infidel.

Let us hear the word of GOD. There we shall find that either there is no GOD, or CHRIST is that GOD: for all the *names*, the *attributes*, the *works* and *worship* of GOD are ascribed to him. These are honours JEHOVAH cannot give unto another. The possessor of them must share in the essence of the divine nature, or we must sink once more into idolatrous polytheism. This truth hath been evidently proved at large by many zealous “con-
“tenders for the faith once delivered unto the
“saints;” and therefore I shall only leave with

(1) Ephes. ii. 12.

you the Scriptures which chiefly speak to the point, with a short observation or two upon them.

That CHRIST is *very* GOD, the *titles* variously ascribed to him declare. Sometimes absolutely he is called GOD (*m*), sometimes the LORD (*n*); distinguished too with the peculiar properties of Deity, "the LORD of hosts and "of glory (*o*);" sometimes by that incommunicable name JEHOVAH (*p*). And these titles so especially his own, that he is said to be "the true GOD (*q*), the only wise God (*r*); "God over all (*s*), blessed for ever." Could such names be attributed to any creature, we must for ever be at a loss to know the peculiar name of HIM, to whom we owe our adorations. But these are the distinguishing titles of the Deity, therefore he who possesses them is *very* God.

His *attributes* are as decisive a proof of his divinity as his names. They are the incommunicable glories of the most High. If to be "almighty (*t*), heart-searching (*u*), omni-

(*m*) Acts xx. 28. (*n*) Coloss. iii. 24. (*o*) James ii. 1. Isai. vi. 3.

(*p*) Isai. vi. 1. (*q*) 1 John v. 20. (*r*) Jude 25.

(*s*) Rom. ix. 5. (*t*) Rev. i. 8. (*u*) Acts i. 24.

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“present (*x*), eternal (*y*), incomprehensible (*z*),
“independent (*a*), immutable (*b*);” if this is
to be *very* GOD, then CHRIST our Redeemer
hath the most undoubted claim to it.

His *works* also proclaim his eternal power
and godhead. If “the heavens declare the
“glory of the LORD, and the firmament
“sheweth his handy-work (*c*);” if on the vast
creation the stamp of the Almighty appears;
if the bright sun or radiant stars, or all the
brighter glories of Cherubs and Seraphs, be-
fore the throne of GOD, proclaim the hand
that made them to be divine; then our JESUS
challenges this honour. “All things were
“made by him; and without him was not
“any thing made that was made (*d*). He
“spake, and it was done (*e*).” And he still
“upholdeth them all (*f*): for his pleasure they
“are and were created (*g*), by whom and for
“whom are all things (*h*).” And as he is the
creator, he is also the governor and judge of
all. To him it appertaineth to exercise every
act of divine power; to “forgive sins (*i*);

(*x*) Matt. xviii. 20.

(*a*) John x. 18.

(*d*) John i. 3.

(*g*) Rev. iv. 11.

(*y*) 1 Tim. i. 17.

(*b*) Heb. i. 12.

(*e*) Psal. xxxiii. 9.

(*h*) 1 Cor. viii. 6.

(*z*) Matt. xi. 27.

(*c*) Psal. xix. 1.

(*f*) Heb. i. 3.

(*i*) Matt. ix. 2.

“to

“to quicken whom he will (*k*) ; to send the “spirit (*l*) ; to raise the dead (*m*) ;” to execute the final judgment (*n*) ; to determine the eternal state of men and angels (*o*). Well might we, as the *Jews* did (*p*), charge every created being with *blasphemy* who should presume to arrogate to himself such power and glory. He that doth these things is GOD alone.

Worship is solely due to the one eternal JEHOVAH. “To him every knee must bow, every “tongue must confess (*q*).” But this is paid in the highest manner to the Lord CHRIST ; is claimed by him as his prerogative ; and offered by saints on earth and angels in heaven. Jealous for the honour of his Father, so as to be incapable of suffering the least profanation in the farthest courts of his house, he yet received and vindicated the *Hosannas* of the multitude “in the midst of the temple (*r*).” These hymns of praise to the most High were no more than his due, “who, being in the form “of GOD, counted it no robbery to be equal “with GOD (*s*). We must honour the Son “as we honour the Father (*t*).” He that

(*k*) John v. 21. (*l*) John xv. 26. (*m*) John vi. 42. (*n*) Rom. xiv. 11.

(*o*) Matt. xxv. 31. 46. (*p*) Matt. ix. 3. (*q*) Rom. xiv. 11.

(*r*) Matt. xxi. 15. (*s*) Phil. ii. 6. (*t*) John v. 23.

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would not from those who regarded him as a man (*u*), receive the least mark of divine honour, most willingly admits an apostle at his feet worshipping him as his "LORD" and his GOD (*x*)." So fully assured were these faithful witnesses of his eternal power and godhead, that in the deepest seasons of distress and difficulty they called upon him, and resigned "their dying souls (*y*)" into his hands. Nor is he GOD on earth alone adored, the hosts of heaven bow down before his footstool. "The angels of GOD worship him (*z*)."
 One of the most glorious visions of the upper world, ever vouchsafed to mortals, was this King upon his throne, surrounded with his Seraphim; their faces veiled with reverential awe, and pouring forth their sacred homage and highest adoration: "they cried one to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory (*a*)."
 And when this present scene shall be no more, this still shall be the service of eternity, when "every creature, day and night, shall never rest saying, Holy, holy, holy LORD GOD AL-

(*u*) Matt. x. x. 17.(*x*) John xx. 28.(*y*) Acts vii. 59.(*z*) Heb. i. 6.(*a*) Isai. vi. 1. — 12.

"mighty,

“mighty, which was, and is, and is to come (b). Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory, and honour, and power, and blessing (c)!” Can higher worship be offered? If this belong to our Redeemer, surely he is *very GOD*.

2. CHRIST is as truly *man* as he is *GOD*. Since redemption was to be obtained in and by the nature which had sinned, “it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren. sin only excepted (d).” This must have been excepted, else he had not been “a lamb without spot or blemish;” nor could he otherwise have “taken away the sin of the world;” for had he been himself a sinner, he should have died under his own iniquity. Now that he is *very man*, and such a sinless man, the scriptures fully assure us. As man he is formed of the substance of his mother, “partaker of flesh and blood,” as other children are, and born in the same way: yet sanctified in the womb, that he might not partake of that corruption, which by natural generation descends to every son of fallen *Adam*. He was a “*holy thing*, undefiled and se-

(c) Rev. iv. 11.

(d) Rev. iv. 11.

(d) Heb. ii. 17.

“parate.

“parate from finners (e);” and for that purpose
“the power of the Highest overshadowed her (f).”

As we are, he had the constituent parts of human nature, a reasonable soul and human flesh. As other children “he increased in wisdom as in stature (g).” He was one with us in all human wants and sinless infirmities : his soul deficient in knowledge, affected with grief, vexed with indignation, sensible of reproaches, choosing to avoid sufferings, exceeding sorrowful under them (h) : his body subject to weariness, hunger, thirst, pain and death (i). Thus he lived thus he died as a man : possessing both natures in all their plentitude : GOD and Man in one CHRIST.

2. The manner in which CHRIST redeemed us from the curse of the law, must be observed ; namely, “by being made a curse for us.” Where we must remark,

First, His substitution for us. *Secondly*, What he bore as our substitute.

(1) CHRIST, both GOD and man, was the sinner’s substitute. “He bore our griefs, and

(e) Heb. vii. 26. (f) Luke 1. 35. (g) Luke ii. 52.

(h) Mark xiii. 32. Mark iii. 5. Matt. xxvi. 38. 39.

(i) John iv. 6. Mark xi. 12. John xix. 28. Psal. cxvi. 3.

Mark xv. 37.

“carried

“carried our sorrows (*k*).” Our state was desperate, you have heard. Nor was there found a remedy, until GOD, from the abyss of his wisdom, declared the counsel of peace which was betwixt the Sacred Three. That one of them should take the sinful nature, and suffer the curse, that justice might be glorified in the punishment, and mercy be exalted in the pardon of sin. The Son consents to be the person. The covenant runs, “If he will make his soul
 “a sacrifice for sin, he shall see of the travail
 “of his soul, and be satisfied:” freely he complies. “Lo! I come to do thy will (*l*).
 “A body is prepared for him (*m*). GOD lays
 “on him the iniquity of us all (*n*). He is
 “made sin for us, who knew no sin (*o*). He
 “suffers, the just for the unjust (*p*).” He offers himself to bear the sins of many, yea in his own body on the tree, to obtain for sinners by his blood-shedding “eternal redemption (*q*).”

ere then behold the second *Adam*: a new covenant-head and representative, bearing the persons and characters of his people, communicating with them in all things: being what

(*k*) Isai. liii. 4. (*l*) Heb. x. 7. (*m*) Heb. x. 5. (*n*) Isai. liii. 6.
 (*o*) 2. Cor. v. 21. (*p*) 1 Pet. iii. 18. (*q*) Heb. ix. 12.

they

they are, and making them so one with him, that all his transactions for them are reckoned as their own: He, a *sin-offering*, a *curse*, a *sufferer* for them; they, *crucified*, *dead*, *buried*, *rising*, *living* in and with him (*r*).

(2.) As our substitute, he underwent all that the law demanded from sinners. The curse in all its extent and bitterness he endured from the cradle to the grave, the award of sin was executed upon him. And how heavily executed, a short review of his sufferings will tell. See the Redeemer entering the lists, sin and hell and death, yea God himself against him. On him the poisoned arrows of vengeance are to be expended. An outcast from the womb! marked as a victim for the sword as soon as he drew his breath, a fugitive—forn—“a worm and no man,—despised and rejected of men:—having no place to lay his “head (*s*).” His whole life a series of labours, wants, temptations, reproaches, persecutions—until the hour came when peculiarly the curse descended, and “the powers of “darkness (*t*)” prevailed—then given into the

(*r*) 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13. Gal. ii. 20. Rom. vi. 8.
Coloss. iii. 1. (*s*) Isai. liii. 3. Matt. viii. 20. (*t*) Luke xxii. 53.

hands of the devil, who is the executioner of divine vengeance, and "hath the power of death (u)," the wages of sin—he endured that fearful baptism of blood and sweat, and tears extorted by the pains of hell which came about him; and finished on a cross the great expiation, having "destroyed death, and him that had the power of it." Wouldst thou, sinner, be a witness of the conflict, and see the burden of thy weighty guilt, laid on him who alone is mighty to save? Go then to the garden of *Gethsemane*, and in the silent darkness of that dreadful night, the groans of JESUS at a distance will direct thy footsteps to that scene of his sufferings. What a sight of horror! What agonizing pangs are these! Why this strong crying and tears? And lo! he falls, he lies along the ground; from every pore, the sweat and blood mingled start in great drops and trickle down; the cold ground steams with the purple gore: weltering he lies. O JESUS, SAVIOUR, what hath thus laid thee low? What extorts from thee these bitter cries? Thy guilt—thy curse—poor sinner. But dost thou stand aghast at this? O couldst thou see my

(u) Heb. ii. 14.

unknown pangs ! my soul's exceeding sorrows, even unto death—my sore amazement—my heaviness past utterance—these blasts of the breath of my Father's displeasure — “ this, “ this is the bitter cup” my soul cries to remove ; but, “ Father, thy will be done (x) ! “ The angels minister to him (y).” The dreadful storm abates—he rises—he seeks his friends—his friends “ asleep through sorrow.” But his enemies are waking : the traitor comes. Betrayed and sold by one disciple—denied by another—forsaken by all—arrested as a thief—and delivered into the hands of the wicked.

Follow him to the judgment seat of Pilate—hear the cries of a blood-thirsty people—and the sentence of an unjust judge.—See insult—mockery—cruelty added to reproach—The scourges that tear his sacred body, and open again the bloody fountain—the thorns pressed hard upon his temples—new wounds to “ mar “ his visage more than any man's (a)—a visage already deformed with *buffetings*, and defiled with *spitting*. What torments he endured ! condemned to the cross, it is bound upon him. He groans, he sinks under the load. Yet “ as

(x) Matt. xxvi. 39—46.

(y) Luke. xxii. 43. (a) Isai. lii. 14.

“ a lamb led to the slaughter, he openeth not
 “ his mouth (b) :” to *Calvary* he travels, there
 to be fastned on it. O ! fearful curse, “ If
 “ this be done in the green tree, what shall be
 “ done in the dry (c) ?” If the fire of divine
 wrath thus terribly seizes the innocent SAVIOUR,
 when but the substitute of the sinner, how will
 it devour the ungodly in the day of judgment,
 fitted as brands for the burning ! The cross
 is fixed in the ground—JESUS is stretched upon
 it—stripped, to endure the shame of our naked-
 ness—covered with clotted gore—a spectacle of
 woe ! Stretched are his sacred arms—O why ?—
 To be fastned with rugged nails to that tree ;
 in shame and torture to expire—to endure the
 death, the accursed death of the cross. They
 pierce his hands, they pierce his feet ; the
 wounds are torn wide by the suspended body.
 He is lifted up. O sinner, look upon him !
 lifted up he is to take away thy iniquities.
 He bears them all on this accursed tree. Stay
 yet a while. Behold this “ man of sorrows—
 “ sorrows like unto which, no others sorrows
 “ ever were (d) !” These sufferings for thee
 he willingly endures. He refuses the wine

(b) *Isai.* liii. 7.(c) *Luke* xxiii. 31.(d) *Lam.* i. 12.

mingled

mingled with myrrh, that he may “drink the
 “dregs of the cup of trembling.” Creation
 beholds astonished the LORD of Life expiring.
 The sun grows dark ; the heavens lour ; the
 earth trembles ; the rocks rend : whilst tears
 of blood descend ; and in the pangs of death
 and dereliction the Redeemer cries, “ My
 “ God, my GOD, why hast thou forsaken
 “ me (e) ?” Then finishes his glorious work,
 proclaims it, and expires. He dies : the sol-
 dier’s spear opens his heart that beats no more
 —the blood and water flow—still warm, though
 life is fled. Thus dies on the accursed tree
 the sinner’s substitute. Sin is atoned for,
 justice is satisfied, the prisoner must be dis-
 charged. His soul is not left in hell, nor
 doth this Holy One of GOD see corruption.
 The grave may not cover her slain. He bursts
 the bands of death in token of his victory,
 and leads captivity captive. Death hath “ no
 “ more dominion over him :” as “ he was
 “ delivered for our offences, he is raised again
 “ for our justification (f).” The righteous
 judge, is now a pardoning GOD. “ Mercy
 “ and truth are met together ; righteousness

(e) Matt. xxvii. 46.

(f) Rom. iv. 25.

“ and peace have kissed each other (g).” The bright perfections of the eternal JEHOVAH here unite and form a new, and to the lost and desperate sinner, the most transcendently adorable view of the divine perfections; the pleasing beams of mercy gild the throne of righteous judgement, and that GOD who once appeared a *consuming fire*, becomes approachable. Glorious is JEHOVAH now in pardoning, and righteous in mercy. Which leads me,

III. To the benefits which by his bloodshedding CHRIST has purchased for us: and these are chiefly,

I. Pardon of our sins and peace with GOD.
 “ In whom we have redemption through his
 “ blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to
 “ the riches of his grace. Being justified by
 “ faith, we have peace with GOD through
 “ JESUS CHRIST our LORD. GOD is righteous and just to forgive us our sins (b).”
 He hath exacted the penalty from our surety: the debt is paid: the bond is canceled. JESUS
 “ hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to
 “ his cross. Who is he that condemneth.

(g) Psal. lxxxv. 10.
 Rom. iii. 26.

(b) Rom. v. 1.

Ephes. i. 7.

“ since

“ since CHRIST hath died (i) ?” This is our prevailing plea. This a sufficient answer to all the accusations of the law, and the fears of a guilty conscience. The more we consider the fulness of the surety, the more shall we be confirmed in the safety of those who trust in him : he cannot fail us. “ In him there is plenteous “ redemption (k).” All fulness ; yea, “ all “ and more than all that we can ask or think (l).” The chief of sinners need not fear. “ He “ can save to the uttermost :” he came into the world for this very purpose. “ Where sin “ abounded, there shall pardoning grace much “ more abound (m).” There is no condemnation lying against the greatest sinner, who pleads the sacrifice of JESUS. GOD *will*— with reverence be it spoken—he *must* “ be “ merciful to his unrighteousness: and his sins “ and iniquities remember no more (n).” His justice and truth are now as much engaged to receive us graciously, as before they were engaged to punish us rigorously. He cannot but abundantly pardon. His glory is engaged to do so. “ Peace is proclaimed on earth, good-

(i) Rom. viii. 34.

Ephes. iii. 20.

(k) Psal. cxxx. 7.

(m) Rom. v. 20.

(l) Coloss. i. 19.

(n) Heb. vii. 12.

“ will towards men (o). The wall of separation is broken down.” The veil of sin is taken away. GOD stretches out the scepter of his grace; commands us to touch it and live. “ Let him take hold on my strength, and make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me (p).” Hear, sinner, and to thy soul’s comfort embrace this blessed scripture. “ GOD was in CHRIST reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Now then we are ambassadors for CHRIST, as though GOD did beseech you by us, we pray you in CHRIST’s stead, be ye reconciled to GOD (q).”

2. By CHRIST’s redemption we obtain all the promises of the spirit. Untill the curse of sin was removed, there could be no intercourse between the holy GOD and sinful man; and if this intercourse were not restored on earth, man must be for ever excluded from the presence of GOD: “ without holiness no man can see the LORD (r).” But no such could be found, unless the spirit of holiness “ created us anew.” Our corruption and weakness

(o) Luke ii. 14.

(p) Isai. xxvii. 5.

(q) 2 Cor. v. 20.

(r) Heb. xii. 14.

unqualified us for any service acceptable to God. Vile we were, and vile we must for ever have remained, if not “renewed in the “spirit of our minds.” CHRIST therefore, in delivering us from the curse of the law, hath obtained the spirit also to deliver us from the bondage of corruption. “He hath led “captivity captive, and received gifts for men (s), even for the rebellious; and he is “now exalted at the right hand of God,” in virtue of his obedience unto death, “to “be a prince and a saviour, to give repentance “to his people (t).” From him all power is derived: “without him we can do nothing (u): “but all things through him strengthening “us (x).” All the fulness of grace to enlighten, enliven, comfort, and sanctify the souls of his redeemed dwells in him, and is derived from him. He is the vine, we the branches. He communicates to us of his fulness, *preventing* and *following* us with the blessings of his goodness—giving us to *will* and to *do* of his good pleasure—he stirs up our hearts to seek his face—helps our infirmities, and sends

(s) Psalm lxxvii. 18.

(t) Acts v. 13.

(u) John xv. 9.

(x) Phil. iv. 31.

the answer of peace, and “an abundant supply
 “of the spirit,” according to our necessities.
 We have now a throne of grace open, and are
 bid “to come boldly to it, that we may ob-
 “tain mercy, and find grace to help in every
 “time of need (y).” And whilst his blood
 is sprinkled on our consciences, we may “draw
 “near in full assurance of faith,” and the
 most confident persuasion, that “whatsoever
 “we shall ask in his name, God will give it
 “us (z). And that thus growing in grace,
 “and in the knowledge of our Lord JESUS
 CHRIST, he will, having conducted us by
 “his counsel here, at last bring us to his
 “glory (a).” For this also,

3. He hath by his blood-shedding obtained for
 us not only present but *eternal redemption* (b)
 Heaven is “a purchased possession,” the price of
 it is the obedience to death, even the death of the
 cross, of JEHOVAH incarnate. This hath opened
 the everlasting doors. There “he, as our
 “forerunner, is for us entered;” and we in
 virtue of our union with, and election in him,
 “are already set down with him in heavenly

(y) Heb. iv. 16.

(z) John xv. 16.

(a) Psa'm lxxiii. 24.

(b) Heb. ix. 12.

“ places

“ places (c).” As members of his body, we must follow our Head. “Where he is, there must we be also.” The promise is sure to all the seed. Even our “meetness for the inheritance of the Saints in light” is in no wise our title to it; that springs solely from everlasting righteousness finished upon the cross. That JESUS was obedient unto death, is all our plea: and at the last day we shall see, and with unceasing praises, own to the glory of our Redeemer, that we receive “eternal life as the gift of God, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord (d).” He that endured the cross alone must wear the crown. No desert or excellence of ours above other men “lifted us from the dunghill to set us among, the eprinces.” The work was all his own who gave himself for us, that “we with his ransomed might come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon our heads (e).” They that surround his throne, all cast their crowns at his feet: they ascribe to him alone their mighty blifs: “for thou wast slain, they cry with one united voice, and hast redeemed

(e) Ephes. ii. 6. Heb. vi. 20.

(d) Rom. vi. 23.

(c) Isai. xxxiv. 10.

“us to God by thy blood, out of every kin-
dred, and tongue, and people, and nation,
and hast made us unto our God kings and
priests (f).” Who wishes not to join their
praises ! And do we wish it indeed ? Let us
then learn them here below. If now we find
in him redemption ; if now we believe in him
as our deliverer from the curse of the law ; if
now we trust in him alone for grace in time,
and glory in eternity : then will he finish his
new creation in us ; perfect what he hath be-
gun, and bring us where neither sin nor death
are known, but HE, the once suffering, now
exalted Redeemer reigns, and all his saints
adore him, yea shall reign with him in glory
everlasting. Amen.

Rev. v. 10. (f)

SERMON

S E R M O N IX.

Salvation by Grace.

EPHESIANS ii. 8.

For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

NO mistakes are so dangerous as those which relate to our eternal salvation: yet through the blindness of our own hearts, and wickedness of others, who would “pervert the right ways of the LORD,” we had need take great heed to our feet, that they turn not out of the way. Our only sure direction is the word of God. This is appointed to be “a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths (g).” He that walketh after this rule, peace will be unto him. As it is the universal guide, it is open for every man’s perusal, and under the Spirit’s teaching plain to every man’s understanding. Many things in it indeed, through a variety of circumstances, are dark and hard to be understood, but they are not points essential to our salvation. These will afford matter of controversy to the

(g) Psal. cxix. 105.

end of the world, to such as prefer knowledge to practice, and choose to dispute rather than obey. The things of most importance and necessary to be known are easy to be understood: "He that runs may read them." No comment is wanting, but a desire to know the truth, with a disposition to follow it. Thus "the Bereans sought and found (*b*)."
And so to the end of the world, "if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of GOD (*i*)."
He that follows the degree of light which the spirit of JESUS gives, shall find it "shine more and more unto the perfect day."

Let us beware then of calling any man master, One is our master, even CHRIST (*k*). "Search the scriptures (*l*)."
It is his command. Therein is contained all we need to know. We have his promise to assist our humble inquiries. "They shall all be taught of GOD (*m*)."
Then the salvation by grace, which the words in the text speak of, will be discovered, embraced and delighted in. "Comparing spiritual things with spiritual," we shall have our hearts daily more confirmed "in the truth as it is in JESUS."

(*b*) Acts, xvii. 11.

(*i*) John. vii. 17.

(*k*) Matt. xxiii. 8.

(*l*) John. v. 39.

(*m*) John. vi. 45.

And

And "following on to know the LORD," shall happily find the salvation by grace, compleated shortly in a salvation of glory.

The grand dispute that in St. *Paul's* day rent the church was, "Whether faith or works justified the sinner; whether man's desert or God's free grace were the cause of salvation?" He was the strenuous asserter of the sovereignty of grace and the freedom of justification. Yea, he reckons these such essential truths, that he calls the opposite doctrines *another gospel* (n). Yet those who have agreed to receive his writings as given by the inspiration of God, have nevertheless revived the errors he condemned, and still seek justification by the law, and salvation by works and not by grace. The following plain truths are submitted to every man's consideration, who will be at the pains of comparing them with the fountain from whence to me they appear to be derived. May they be the blessed means of enlightening any heart in the knowledge of the truth, or of confirming the faith of those who are seeking the salvation by grace revealed in the gospel!

(n) Gal. i. 6.

I shall endeavour to shew from these words,

I. What is the salvation here spoken of.

II. Prove that it is wholly of grace.

III. Shew the necessity of its being of faith,
that it might be by grace.

IV. Make some suitable application.

I. The salvation here spoken of, is our *final salvation*; including all the various steps which lead to it. This is evident from the preceding verses, where St. Paul mentions not only our resurrection together with CHRIST, but also “our sitting together in heavenly places in Christ JESUS (o);” that is, by virtue of that union which subsists between the head and the members. In his exaltation we are already interested. Our salvation is as much secured for us at present in CHRIST, as it will be at the last day: for “by grace we are saved.” He hath perfected the work of redemption for us in all its vast extent, obtained pardon for all guilt, wrought out an everlasting righteousness eternally to justify the ungodly—discharged us from the enslaving dominion, as well as curse of sin—and as “our forerunner is for us entered” to take possession of

the inheritance he hath purchased by virtue of his obedience unto death, and to bestow it on them who "shall be heirs of salvation." We must take the whole salvation together. We must not separate the links of this chain of grace. The most invenomed cavillers will then be disappointed; they must wilfully shut their eyes against the truth, or own it most honourable for God, and most effectual to engage our hearts to him. CHRIST, the author of this eternal salvation, is seen freely pardoning, freely justifying, freely glorifying, and by his Spirit saving his people not merely from the punishment, but from the power of their sins.

II. This salvation is wholly of grace. The word *grace* has several meanings in scripture. But here and in many other places its signification is clear from the context. It is the gift, or an act of the mere favour, of God. And to this the whole of our salvation must be ascribed, whether in the design—the execution—or communication of it: Salvation is wholly of grace,

1. The contrivance of it was of grace. "The things which are not," as much subsist in the divine mind as if they were. God foresaw the fall of man, and provided a remedy before the worlds were. His own glory is the end of all
his

his actions. In this "he designed transcendentally to glorify the riches of his grace (*p*).¹" Such is the good pleasure of his will.—Fallen man hath nothing but misery to present: GOD will therefore have mercy, because he will have mercy: He worketh after the counsel of his own will. "He hath saved us, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in CHRIST JESUS before the world began (*q*).²" This is the origin of our salvation from eternity; the mere pleasure and sovereign grace of GOD. Nothing foreseen in us, either done or to be done by us, but his own purpose and grace are the moving cause of our salvation.

2. The execution of this scheme of salvation, planned out in the divine mind from eternity, is wholly of grace: That GOD should "not spare his own son, but freely give him up for us all (*r*).³" That the son should become man, "for us men and our salvation:" That he should "by one oblation of himself once offered obtain eternal redemption for us (*s*).⁴" was what we could no more have conceived than we could de-

(*p*) Ephes. i. 6.(*q*) 2 Tim. i. 9.(*r*) Rom. viii. 32.(*s*) Heb. ix. 12.

serve:

serve: yea, it was the very opposite to all our deserts, and above all our thoughts. The angels themselves could not fathom this abyss of love. This “mystery hid from ages and generations” the Spirit hath revealed to us in the gospel.

GOD knew full well what his son must endure: CHRIST saw for what end he became incarnate; for he was in the divine purpose “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (1).” The obstinacy of men and their rejection of him was foretold: yet “he gave himself a propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but “for the sins of the whole world (2).” It was an act of such astonishing mercy and rich grace as passed all understanding. “GOD commendeth his “love towards us, in that whilst we were “yet sinners CHRIST died for the ungodly (3).” Every demerit of ours is disregarded, or rather sovereign grace triumphs in giving the greatest gift imaginable to the most undeserving: for it is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that JESUS CHRIST came into the world to save the chief of sinners—That where sin hath abounded there might grace much more abound.

(1) Rev. xiii. 8.

(2) 1 John ii. 2.

(3) Rom. v. 6. 8.

3. The communication of this salvation to every individual who shall finally partake of it, is purely of grace. Consider it as implying present salvation from guilt and from corruption; or the eternal salvation in heaven.

1. Salvation from *guilt* is wholly by *grace*. We are considered in scripture "as enemies, as "ungodly, unjust, and dead in trespasses and "sins (y)." There is nothing in any man, which can in the most distant manner give him a claim to the divine mercy. Our case is, as hath been shewn, utterly desperate. God finds nothing in us but sin, and the disposition of the heart continually towards it. Whoever is truly brought to GOD through CHRIST knows this to have been his very case, until "GOD called him "by his grace." The king upon his throne issues the undeserved pardon. "He justifies the "ungodly (z);" and this, "according to his "good pleasure, which he hath purposed in him- "self (a)." He doth not find us just, but makes us so. It is an act of his mere grace and mercy; without the shadow of desert on our part. Yea, when we were branded with all the black guilt

(y) Rom. v. 6.—10.

Ephes. ii. 1.

(z) Rom. iv. 5.

(a) Ephes. i. 9.

and demerit, flowing from the enmity of our hearts against God, the ungodliness of our lives, and our deadly state of trespasses and sins. It is true, it is on account of CHRIST; "we have redemption through his blood (b):" but the pardon of sin comes not to us as the less a matter of favour, because "he gave himself a ransom for all (c)." CHRIST's death and obedience alter not our state of demerit: besides, the very gift of CHRIST, who purchased this great mercy is in the highest degree of grace.

2. Salvation from the *power of sin* is wholly of grace: whilst guilt remained, no throne of grace was open—GOD appeared a consuming fire—but this being taken out of the way, GOD as a reconciled GOD, condescends to visit us, and sends his spirit into our hearts. Without this we must for ever remain the bondsmen of corruption: "They who are in the flesh cannot please GOD (d)." And in this state we remain until CHRIST delivers us through atonement. Then our persons "become accepted in the beloved (e):" He takes possession of us for his own: "He worketh then mightily all our works in

(b) Ephes. i. 7.

(c) 1 Tim. ii. 6.

(d) Rom. viii. 8.

(e) Ephes. i. 6.

“us (f).” We have nothing we “have not received (g). All our *sanctification* is as much the gift of God, as our *justification*. In all our services we offer him only his own. “By the “grace of God we are what we are (h).” Boasting is utterly excluded. We are not only pardoned as rebels, but of mere bounty fed every day, and the life which is given us is maintained from the king’s table. “The life which I will give them “shall be in them a well of water springing up “to everlasting life (i).” All is of grace. *Faith, repentance, love, obedience, perseverance in well-doing*, are all expressly declared to be “the “gifts of God (k),” or the effects immediately produced by those gifts.

It must not be inferred from hence, that we are machines, actuated merely by impulses. By no means. The first of God’s gifts in sanctification is “the restoration of our will to its “right choice of God as our master. He, in the exercise of his own gifts, establishes, strengthens, settles us. We delight in the law of God after the inward man. The choice, and work consequent thereupon is not the less our own,

(f) *Isai. xxvi. 12.*(g) *1 Cor. iv. 7.*(h) *1 Cor. xv. 10.*(i) *John iv. 14.*(k) *Ephes. ii. 8. Acts v. 31. Gal. v. 6.**Heb. viii. 10. John x. 28.*

because

because "his grace prevents us that we may
"have a good-will, and worketh with us when
"we have that good-will (*)."

3. The eternal salvation of our souls is also
of grace. It is certain that GOD hath promi-
sed to reward us "according to our works (l)."
And a judgment day shall prove to the admi-
ring host around the throne, that the judge
of all the earth doth right. Yet will eter-
nal life be nevertheless acknowledged as the
gift of GOD through JESUS CHRIST; and we
shall, "as many as are saved, look for this
"eternal life as the mercy of the LORD (m)."
For not only have we obtained the first step of
admission into the kingdom of heaven by grace;
and travelling in GOD's appointed way of holi-
ness have been kept and preserved through the
same, but also our inheritance itself is still
"a purchased possession (n)." CHRIST's per-
fect obedience affords the only legal claim to
life eternal. We receive it therefore as of pro-
mise through him. There will be in us "a
"meetness indeed for the inheritance amongst
"the saints in light (o);" but no meritorious

(*) Article X.

(l) Rev. xxii. 12.

1 Cor. xv. 41.

(m) Jude 21.

(n) Ephes. i. 14.

(o) Coloss. i. 12.

claim.

claim. No man will then say, "This is the wages of my work." No, he will be surprised even at what CHRIST adjudges to him, as conscious how unworthy he is: if he must enter into the kingdom, it will be for ever to proclaim, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive glory, and honour, and praise, and blessing (p)."

III. It is of faith that it might be by grace (q). It could be of grace no other way than by faith. Faith stands opposed to works in the next verse: "not of works lest any man should boast (r)." If works of any kind preceded our acceptance with GOD, it would be no more of faith; nor consequently by grace. This is the alone medium by which the gift of GOD can be conveyed to us to secure the whole glory to himself. Those who know not the necessity of *thus* receiving the gift of GOD, from a deep conviction of the impossibility of doing any work pleasing to GOD until their attainer is reversed, their guilt pardoned, and their persons accepted as righteous, ever oppose this method of salvation as too abasing. And they who object to it, as having an un-

(p) Rev. iv. 11.

(q) Rom. iv. 16.

(r) Ephes. ii. 9.

favourable influence on morality, shew evidently their utter unacquaintedness both with the nature of true faith and the effects of it.

“Faith is a divine conviction of the veracity of God in his word.” The general object of it is the word of God: the effect wrought by that word is conviction of the truth. The agent is God: “it is the gift of God.” A man can no more reason himself into true faith, than he can create a world: all external evidence is of itself incapable of producing the faith of God’s elect. The head may have nothing to object, when the heart is as far as ever from “believing unto righteousness.” Though the external evidence be from God, there must be an internal divine conviction also. It is the work of the Holy Ghost “to convince of righteousness (s), and “enable us to believe (t).”

The great object of faith in the word is JESUS CHRIST, and all the promises which are in him: these revealed by the faithful God, faith acquiesces in and embraces. And in this submission to the righteousness of God, and acceptance of salvation by faith, there is implied,

(s) John xvi. 8.

(t) Phil. i. 29. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

First, An acknowledgement of a state of absolute helplessness and guilt: whilst we imagine we have any thing of our own to commend us to God, faith is made void. The salvation by grace proposed to faith is only for the lost and desperate; for those who are convinced that in and of themselves they are nothing, have nothing, can do nothing pleasing to God. Until the soul be brought to this state of self-emptiness, a man cannot "believe to salvation:" he must be going about to establish his own righteousness. He will ever be thinking that he hath or ought to have some *claim* to the divine favour beyond other men. He will be trusting, in whole or in part, on something done or to be done by him, instead of what has been done for him more than seventeen hundred years ago: but when any soul is taught his real state, then he is assured he must be saved by grace, or not at all. The grand mistake is here. Men know not the depth of their native corruption, wickedness and weakness. When this is discovered, then—and *only then*—salvation by grace through faith will meet with no more objections.

Secondly, In receiving this salvation, faith simply submits to the truth declared. It receives

ceives the "record of God, that he hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son (*u*).^u" The believer doth nothing to merit this salvation, nor sees any desert in himself more than in the vilest of sinners. Faith freely takes what God freely gives: the sinner's heart, as the beggar's hand, receives the gift of grace.

Thus it is, that through faith at first we are brought into a state of reconciliation with God; and "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through JESUS CHRIST our LORD (*x*):"^x and ever after this is the support of our soul, and through faith we continue to receive out of the Redeemer's fulness all the needful supplies of grace for the life of holiness: "The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God (*y*)."^y Believing the certainty of the promises in him, "we draw water out of these wells of salvation (*z*):"^z and our final perseverance and eternal happiness come in the same way; "being kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (*a*).^a He that endureth

(*u*) 1 John v. 11.

(*x*) Rom. v. 1.

(*y*) Gal. ii. 20.

(*z*) Isai. xli. 3.

(*a*) 1 Pet. i. 5.

“to the end, the same shall be saved (b).”
We shall endure if our faith fail not.

Thus then, from the whole, I trust the salvation by grace through faith hath appeared to you plainly to be the word of GOD; and have nothing more to add than a short application from what hath been said.

1. What encouragement doth the Gospel give to every sinner who sees his guilt and misery?
“It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that JESUS CHRIST came into the world to save sinners; yea, the chief of sinners (c).” No man need despair because he is a poor and miserable wretch that hath no works to plead; nothing “but evil, and that continually.” Salvation is of Grace, “without money and without price (d);” and therefore free for every guilty soul. Think not that because sin hath abounded, that therefore you are far from hope. By no means: “where sin hath abounded, there shall grace much more abound (e).” The salvation of JESUS is compleat and perfect, lacking nothing. Whatever degrees of guilt men may have contracted,

(b) Matt. x. 22.

(c) 1 Tim. i. 15.

(d) Isai. lv. 1

(e) Rom. v. 20.

it bears the same favourable aspect to all. They who have the least sin must be damned if they do not plead it; and they who are loaded with the deepest guilt are sure of pardon and acceptance if they do. It is not suspended on any conditions of previous endeavours, and labours, and resolutions of amendment in us; for that were to destroy the riches of the Grace, and to counteract the very designs of God. You are no more required to do any thing to merit it, than you are to pluck the sun from the heavens, or stay the current of the seas. Indeed you might as easily do the one as the other. You are undone and lost; your case is desperate: God will glorify his grace in pardoning you. He sends his Son: he declares "he is well pleased in him," and with all that come to God by him. This is the *unspeakable gift*. It is *free* as the light of the sun: "Look " to him and be yet saved, all the ends of the " earth (*f*). " He wants no good thing of you. He asks for no such thing from you: " Believe, " and be ye saved (*g*)," is the Gospel word. In self-despair thus to be found at the foot of the cross is salvation begun; and that life derived

(*f*) Isai. xlv. 22.(*g*) Acts xvi. 31.

from a believing view of "JESUS delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification (*b*), will by the same grace be maintained, till "we shall see him face to face (*i*)"—be with him where he is—and like him as he is.

2. The sin and danger of seeking salvation in any other way than by Grace, is exceeding great. Yet this are many continually seeking to obtain "by works of righteousness which they have done," or by blending Faith and Works together, as concurring causes of their salvation. Nothing reflects such dishonour upon GOD, nothing can be so surely fatal to ourselves as such an attempt.

It reflects such high dishonour on GOD and his Son. It saith, "Salvation is no more of Grace:" for is any thing besides "CHRIST's *one* oblation once offered" needful? Then you associate yourself with him, become a partner of his undertaking, and rob him of that peculiar glory of which he is so jealous. But he wants nothing of you: he can receive nothing from you; because, indeed, you can offer nothing which must not still offend. Which of your good deeds will you bring to the cross

(*b*) Rom. iv. 25.

(*i*) 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

as auxiliary to the Saviour's atonement? With what abhorrence must it be rejected by him, "who by the eternal Spirit offered himself "without spot unto God?" Surely had any such spot been found in him, as is in every work of yours, he had died in vain. Where is the righteousness perfect and immaculate which you can plead as your title to glory? All your righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and you altogether become abominable. Besides, where were the riches of grace if you contributed ever so little to the purchase? "If it be of "works, it is no more Grace, otherwise work "is no more work (*k*)."
God's glory in pardoning would then be utterly obscured, and eternal life no longer the gift of God.

And what can be so fatal to yourself? You thus cut yourself off from the only method of salvation; you counteract the designs of God. You put it out of his power to save you, for he cannot deny himself. If you will lay any "other foundation than he hath laid, you are "fallen from grace (*l*):" you must abide that devouring storm which will sweep away your refuge of lies. And woe unto those works that

(*k*) Rom. xi. 6.

(*l*) Gal. v. 4.

stand up to plead for your acceptance in that great day ! Unable to bear the severity of GOD's justice, "this broken reed you have leaned upon " will run into your hand and pierce it (m)." You will then too late discover, that those who would not plead a salvation by Grace will never be able to escape the damnation of hell.

3. How glorious to GOD, how honourable to the REDEEMER, how safe for the undone sinner, how effectual to engage his heart to GOD, must this method of Gospel-grace appear ! GOD is acknowledged to be all majesty and all mercy ; CHRIST all-glorious and all-sufficient. We have grounds of confidence the most enduring and satisfying : and for all the Grace we receive feel the constrainings of the debt of gratitude immense as the gift bestowed on us.

To love GOD cannot but be the immediate effect of faith in this salvation : and obedience will then become our *delight* as well as *duty*. For "Faith worketh by love ; and this is the " love of GOD, that we keep his command-
" ments ; and his commandments are no longer
" counted grievous (n)." With what appro-
bation doth a sinner saved by Grace regard the

(m) Isai. xxxvi. 6.

(n) 1 John v. 3.

whole will of God *preceptive* or *providential*; and *long to run the way of his commandments*! And what growth in grace, and spiritual advancements in the divine life may not be expected to spring from this love of CHRIST constraining him (o)? Thus, what all the impotent endeavours of man by his own powers could never effect, the faith of God's elect produceth: not "making void the law, but establishing it (p)," *establishing* it on the only solid basis, the obedience of him, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth—enabling us to approve the law in its awful extent and spirituality as holy, just, and good—engaging our obedience from principles of divine love, which alone can effectually influence, and thus leading us onward to perfection absolute in glory, as the summit of our hopes and consummation of our felicity.

(o) 2 Cor. v. 14.

(p) Rom. iii. 31.

S E R M O N X.

On the Righteousness of Faith.

ROMANS x. 4.

CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

THE Gospel of JESUS is not merely admirable, as containing a system of the purest morality, enforced by the strongest motives and argument, and recommended by the bright example of its author; but the transcendent excellence and distinguishing glory thereof, appears in the divine substitution of one for all, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto GOD. Fallen man could receive no benefit from the purest precepts, or most perfect pattern; these could only serve to blacken his despair, whilst he felt himself unable to obey the one, or imitate the other. When therefore the grace of GOD, which bringeth salvation, appeared unto men, it was not by works of righteousness expected from them, but “solely through the
“righteousness of our GOD and SAVIOUR JESUS
“CHRIST.”

“CHRIST.” As his blood offered in sacrifice was the price of our ransom, and all our sins were laid upon his body on the tree ; so also in his person, as the fulfiller of all *righteousness*, on the behalf of his people, were we designed to stand complete before the throne, and from him to derive our title to that eternal glory, which God, who cannot lie, hath promised to all the chosen seed before the world began.—In contradiction therefore to all the inventions of the guilty, and therefore uneasy consciences,—and in opposition to every system of righteousness invented and prescribed by the folly of men, who would be wise above what is written,—the Gospel appears to tarnish the pride of all human glory—to stamp contempt on the idle efforts of impotent sinners—to explode the admired precepts of sages and philosophers—to lay all the pretended excellence of creatures, whose nature is earthly, sensual, devilish, in the dust, and instead of the vain imaginations of worms, whose pretences to wisdom are but splendid ignorance, to introduce a system, wherein, “ *the foolishness of God*” (for such it appears to the unenlightened heart) “ *is wiser than men ; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*” The distinguishing characteristic of this system is

“ the righteousness therein revealed ;” a righteousness not wrought in us, or to be performed by us, but provided for us, wrought out in the person of our IMMANUEL, compleat and perfect in all its parts, and everlasting in its influence ; a righteousness that magnifies the law, brings glory to GOD in the highest , and being the appointment of GOD himself, must be always accepted by him, and entitle the soul that pleads it to all the rewards promised to obedience, perfect, absolute and interrupted.

To open this more fully will be, through the divine assistance, the subject of the ensuing Discourse. May the eternal Spirit whilst I am speaking, with his divine light and power, take the things of CHRIST and shew them unto you !

1. GOD's nature and law are immutable, and therefore the demands of both must be immutable also. *This do, and thou shalt live.* The creature, from his very state and condition of dependance by nature, is bound to an absolute conformity to the will of his Creator. Nothing can discharge him from this debt. His inability does not vacate the obligation under which he lies by the very law of his creation. When he conforms thereto he is righteous ; every deviation from it in the least as well as greatest

article

article renders him unrighteous, a breaker of the law, and consequently incapable of ever after claiming the reward promised to obedience ; because it is evident, that the least failure must put an abiding bar to every demand, the law being broken, and the most perfect obedience afterwards only the exact measure of present duty, and incapable of repairing in the least the breach already made. They who talk of a human righteousness seem not to understand the tenor of the divine law, its extent, spirituality, unalterable nature, and fearful sanction. And they who speak of the Gospel as a milder dispensation than that of the law, admitting partial instead of perfect obedience, manifest deplorable ignorance of the first principles of the doctrine of CHRIST, understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm. Hath sin under the Gospel become less horrible in its nature ? Hath its deadly wages received any alteration ? Is GOD less pure to connive at, less righteous to punish, and less faithful in fulfilling his denunciations of wrath against it ? No, in nowise. Not one jot or tittle shall pass from the law till all be fulfilled. The difference between the Law and Gospel lies not in the milder rule admitted by the latter, to suppose which is

little short of blasphemy. The same GOD is the author of both dispensations, a GOD of unalterable purity, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning; his demands of obedience perfect, absolute, and interrupted, are the same in both; nothing partial or short of perfection under the Gospel or Law can possibly please him as a justifying righteousness. The only blessed difference lies in that substitution which is provided under the one, but unknown to the other. The righteousness in extent is the same, and the law demanded it at *our* hands personally. In the Gospel, GOD graciously appoints and accepts a surety, "the LORD is well pleased for his righteousness sake." And he by an obedience unto death is appointed to magnify the law and make it honourable, by this means bringing in that everlasting righteousness, standing complete in which his people may appear boldly without spot before the throne of GOD. This is the

2d Point. No perfect righteousness being found in any of the sons of men, the LORD our righteousness stands forth as the great object of faith and hope to all his redeemed.

What hath been advanced in the Sermons preceding on the corruption of man's nature
and

and depravity of his heart and life, will, I hope, have made it unnecessary here to enter into any farther proof, that the sons of Adam have not the least pretence to make before GOD to that righteousness which delivereth from death. Our best is bad, our very righteousnesses, as we comparatively term them, in the sight of the holy ones, are but filthy rags, and all we as an unclean thing. Let us now therefore turn our eyes to a more pleasing scene. Vanish, ye dreary wastes and barren sands of native corruption, the habitation of dragons and every unclean and loathsome beast, vexed with the perpetual blasts of divine displeasure, whilst fearful storms of eternal vengeance rising in prospect, blacken still deeper and deeper the dreadful horizon. Behold a new creation rises! A new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The clouds of wrath disperse before the sun of righteousness arising with healing in his wings. —The wilderness and solitary place gladden at his genial beams,—and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose, beholding the glory of the LORD, and the excellence of our God. He comes—the great IMMANUEL — The repairer of the breach—the fulfiller of the law, as well as penal sacrifice,—“made sin for us—who knew no
“ sin,

“ sin, that we might be made the righteousness
 “ of GOD in him,” well may we then break
 forth with the enraptured prophet, “ Rejoice ye
 “ heavens, for the LORD hath done it: shout
 “ ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into
 “ singing ye mountains, O forest and every tree
 “ therein, for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob,
 “ and glorified himself in Israel.” He hath
 wrought out eternal redemption, by bringing
 in an everlasting righteousness, and glorified
 himself in the complete and finished salvation
 of his Israel, becoming henceforth the alone,
 unrivalled, and most worthy possessor of all
 their adorations, love, and praise.

“ CHRIST was made of GOD unto us righte-
 “ ousness.” — It was a matter of divine ap-
 pointment, the issue of the council of peace
 that was between the sacred persons, for this end
 he became man, a second representative, the
 LORD from heaven. That as by one man’s
 disobedience many were made sinners, so by the
 obedience of one many might *be made righteous*:
 his transactions being as much reckoned to their
 account to justify and entitle them to life and
 glory, as Adam’s fall brought sin, and death
 its curse, upon our consciences. For as “ by
 “ the offence of one judgment came upon all
 “ men

“ men to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” Weigh, meditate upon, and mix with faith these blessed Scriptures, sinner, that all their sweetness, fullness, and hope-inspiring influence may be then shed abroad in thy soul !

In order to fulfil all righteousness, GOD was manifest in the flesh. One of the divine persons in the ever-adorable Trinity humbleth himself to take our nature, and become obedient to the law for man : a voluntary obedience undertaken in order to magnify that law, which in itself was holy, just, and good, and promised the reward of life eternal to the perfect. Hence arises our title to glory. “ CHRIST is the end of the law for “ righteousness to every one that believeth.”—The righteousness which the law enjoined as its greatest end, CHRIST fulfilled, not merely for himself but his people ; faith, that receives the divine record, brings to us possession of this righteousness. Thus Paul desired to be found in him, “ not having (saith he) mine own righteousness which is by the law,” flowing from my obedience thereto, “ but that which is by the “ faith of CHRIST, the righteousness which is “ of GOD by faith.” That which GOD hath appointed

appointed now as the only justifying righteousness in his sight, and to which faith submits as the only title on which we can claim the reward of eternal life; "for GOD hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his SON," obtained by his obedience, and bestowed on those, whose persons he in our nature represented.

The satisfaction received from this vicarious obedience, and GOD's testimony of his being well pleased for his righteousness' sake, appear in the most striking and most convincing point of view, by the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST from the dead, and his admission in our nature glorified into the heavenly state, where eternal life, the reward of obedience, is to be enjoyed. His death was to make an end of sin by suffering the penalty; his righteousness to secure our lost, and by us irrecoverable title to life and blessedness.—As he died professedly, therefore, in a public character delivered for our offences, and was raised as such for our justification, we have the most convincing evidence therein, that he finished the work which was allotted him to do, that he had to the uttermost complied with the terms under which the salvation of sinners was to be secured, and therefore had a right to claim for himself and them that life which was the

" reward

“reward of obedience. He was loosed from
 “the bonds of death, because *it was not possible*
 “he should be holden of them.” And the
 reason why it was not possible is evident. God
 as a righteous God could not refuse the reward
 of life to him who had so justly earned it, and
 therefore raised him from the dead, and set
 him at his own right hand in heavenly places.
 But all he enjoys, as well as all he undertook, we
 are deeply interested in, and interested in his
 glory, because interested in the obedience to
 death which led him thereto. We are not
 only crucified with him, and in his person bear
 the penalty of sin laid on his body on the tree,
 but “risen with him,” yea “set down with
 “him in heavenly places, have already “ever-
 “lasting life,” and are taught to regard the
 mansions of blessedness as “a purchased pos-
 session,” on which we enter not by virtue of
 our acquisition, but as “heirs to whom they
 descend in virtue of the right acquired by our
 ancestors. Thus the many sons are brought
 unto glory. Now, as it is evident that we can
 in no view apply these things to ourselves, but as
 we are considered as one with him and he with
 us, so one with him, that we bear and enjoy
 as a wife does the husband’s name, honours
 and

and privileges (a); as evident it must be that all these blessings are derived to us in virtue of what he hath done for us, and our title to them stands on the alone foundation of the real excellence, and everlasting efficacy of that righteousness which he fulfilled in our nature, of which all these things in Scripture are considered as the reward; being accepted in the Beloved, and complete in him, all things are ours as we are CHRIST'S. And thus he sees in us the travail of his soul, and is satisfied. He brings in the righteousness, we enjoy the benefit, He hath all the glory.

3. The office of Faith. This is as simple as the salvation proposed, is complete and perfect. It receives the record which GOD hath given of his Son. All the fulness of pardon, righteousness, grace, revealed in the Gospel as lodged in him for his redeemed the believer acknowledges, and sets to his seal that GOD in all his promises is true. A variety of different kinds of faith have been defined, dissected, criticised upon, and this subject has furnished large matter for some of the voluminous codes of theological controversy.

(a) Isaiah.

The

The faith of GOD's elect is plain. They who possess it, acknowledge it as coming not from nature, reasoning or human suasion,—but the gift of GOD (as more fully shall be spoken to hereafter)—The object faith views is the divine righteousness (*b*).—The effect it produces is love.—The end it aims at is the divine glory, describing all to grace, and receiving every blessing as the gift of GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. GOD's truth when accompanied with *divine conviction*, produces credence in the sinner's heart. No man can say that JESUS is the LORD but by the HOLY GHOST. When he takes the things of CHRIST, and shews them unto us, then we can say, “I know in whom I have believed”—the mind receives a satisfaction flowing from the persuasion of the truth of GOD in his promises, and the perfection of the work of JESUS. The ungodly that believe in JESUS are justified from all things. The law can demand nothing of them, but what they are ready to produce in full satisfaction. If it requires the penalty of transgression, they reply by faith, “that the blood of JESUS cleanseth from all sin.”—If it requires perfection of obedience, they produce a

(*b*) John xv. 10.

righteousness

righteousness answerable to the utmost requisition of the God of righteousness, which he is glorified in receiving, as well as we secure and happy in pleading. This is the life of the redeemed soul. He every day stands on the same foundation, and holds all his hope on the same tenure. “The life I now live in the flesh I live “by the faith of Son of God.”—“Thus he that “believeth *shall* be saved.” ’Tis impossible in the nature of things that he should perish. There is an inseparable connection between faith and salvation, because that righteousness, which is the object of faith, hath opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Till God’s promises prove deceitful, or CHRIST’s righteousness incomplete, the gates of glory must stand open to every sinner who draws near by the new and living way which he hath consecrated. They have all that God ever did or can require at the hands of any creature. The end of the law is, with regard to them completely, gloriously answered, for CHRIST is their righteousness, and they are complete in him. Blessed estate ! May thy soul, reader, be with mine abidingly found in the enjoyment of it, till faith be swallowed up in the fruition of all the glory that shall be revealed !

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I shall have done with the following short observations.

I. How vain and sandy a foundation do they build upon, who seek their peace and hope and glory from their supposed excellence above other men ! There is in the world a variety of characters, and a vast difference between the temper and conduct of men ; hence comparing themselves with others, self-love and self-preference naturally engender a conceit of some superior goodness, and consequently some claim on the divine favour. But GOD seeth not as man seeth. In his view and regard “ *all* ” have “ *alike* ” “ *sinned and come short of his glory.* ” They are “ *all* gone out of the way, they are *altogether* ” “ *become abominable, there is none that doth* ” “ *good, no not one.* ” He overlooks the petty distinctions on which proud sinners vaunt themselves, and classes them together as ungodly, as offenders against his holy law, and obnoxious to wrath. The matter in his view is not how great is the number or aggravations of men’s sins, what feeble efforts they have made to oppose grosser pollutions, or to be found in the practice of the things called moral duties ; what he requires is perfect righteousness : they that come short of this, fall under the curse, and must
remain

remain for ever destitute in themselves of any plea that can avail them at GOD's bar. If the righteousness of saints in glory, or of archangels, could be possessed by us, and one sin was committed, that moment our state must be as desperate as that of the devils themselves. The soul that hath never discovered this, and felt the conviction of hopeless guilt and helpless misery thence arising, but for the righteousness which brings life and immortality to light in the Gospel, is to all saving purposes in darkness even until now, and must as the devils eternally remain so, unless of sovereign grace "he who
 "caused the light to shine out of darkness,
 "shine into his heart to give him the light of
 "the knowledge of the glory of GOD as it is
 "manifested in the face of JESUS CHRIST." There is no difference between one sinner and another in GOD's account, but what is made by his sovereign grace alone -- *grace which reigns* through RIGHTEOUSNESS unto eternal life by JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Without this the most pure in his own eyes, and prudent in his own sight, will have only purity enough to damn him to eternity, and wisdom only to guide him into everlasting burnings. "For cursed is every

“ one that continueth not in all things written
“ in the book of the law to do them.”

II. “ This is eternal life to know thee, the
“ only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom
“ thou hast sent.” The knowledge of GOD’s
glorious character as displayed in the Gospel of
his grace, and manifested in the Son of his love,
brings eternal life with it. But the great mani-
festations of the grace of GOD in the Gospel lies
in the divine substitution of the just for the un-
just. It is in this and this alone, that the grand
constellation of the divine attributes appears in
the most transcendent lustre, where “ mercy
“ and truth meet together, righteousness and
“ peace have kissed each other.” The sinner,
however aggravated his transgressions, however
corrupted and desperately wicked he discovers his
heart to be, is not left desperate. He sees a way
open, wherein GOD can be just, and yet *the*
justifier of the ungodly — wherein the law may be
magnified in its utmost purity, and yet he be-
come blessed in the attainment of *righteousness*
without works — and this in a way of GOD’s
own appointment, and in which greater glory
and honour shall redound to him, through all
eternity, in the salvation of the miserable and
desperate, than could have arisen to him, had
they

they been left under deserved wrath. In JESUS CHRIST the mystery is unveiled, all is accomplished by him, to bring glory to GOD in the highest, by the very means which secures his good-will to sinful man; a mystery of love, which devils in despair behold, and gnash with madness and envy, which angels desire to look into as matter of their eternal wonder, and the subject of their new and unceasing praises. O blessed is the sinner that in this righteousness stands forth in the great day, and now, from deep conviction of its necessity feels himself disposed and determined to know, and plead nothing else as the ground of his confidence and hope towards GOD!

III. The hope which this righteousness begets, is the main spring which moves every wheel of the renewed man's heart. It doth not (as the unawakened, and unenlightened, ever urge, and must continue to do so, till GOD shines into their heart)—It doth not invite to immoral conduct, to continue in sin that grace may abound, or lull the soul into any stupid indifference with regard to the things that are excellent, and of good report, as if now every band was loosed. No. The bands of love stronger than death receive all their vigour from this glorious

rious subject. The love of Christ constraineth us. The righteousness he puts upon us teaches us not to live under the power of evil ; but its immediate and native tendency (as will I hope hereafter appear) is to teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to have our conversation righteously, soberly and godly in this present evil world. They who charge the truth with imputations of its tendency to lead men to those very works which the Son of GOD was manifested to destroy, and oppose the propagation of it under the specious pretences of its unfavourable influence to the interest of true morality, understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm. Their blasphemy and blood be upon their own heads—We are free, and I hope shall not cease to pray on their behalf that GOD would give them also repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.

S E R M O N XI.

On the Nature of true Holiness.

EPHESIANS ii. 10.

For we are his workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works, which GOD hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

THE great Apostle Paul knew best the tendency of the principles which he preached. He was not afraid that the doctrines of free Grace would lead men to licentiousness. He had happily experienced the contrary in his own soul, and seen the blessed effects of them on thousands of others. He knew that “ what “ the law could not do, in that it was weak “ through the flesh (c).” the Gospel, “ which “ is the power of GOD unto salvation,” could effect. The discovery of the amazing grace of GOD in JESUS CHRIST laid a constraining influence upon the soul, which the brightest displays of the beauty of virtue or the clearest con-

(c) Rom. viii. 3.

victions of moral obligation, never could produce. Many have thought that the apostle was a dangerous guide, and needed the correction of his brother *James*; as well as all the fine comments which they have since invented for maintaining the honor of religion, and securing the interests of morality. But *James*, as well as *Paul*, if they were alive, would disclaim the vain efforts of these reconcilers. St. *Paul* was as zealous an advocate for true holiness as St. *James*; and St. *James* as true an advocate for faith, and one who expected salvation by grace, as much as St. *Paul*. They laid the same foundation, and built with the same materials. "JESUS CHRIST was their chief corner-stone(d)." By faith in him they expected "justification to life;" and they raised the superstructure of real holiness thereon. The "purification of the heart" St. *James* as much ascribed to the efficacy of faith (e) as St. *Paul*. But amidst the cry which is made about the interests of morality, what is become of the practice of it? where is that to be found? I am afraid the self-seeking, pleasure-loving, honour-loving, money-loving, preferment-hunting conversation of our

(d) Ephes. ii. 20.

(e) Acts xv. 9—14.

loasted champions for morality, will prove a bad comment upon their doctrine. The fine-spun reasonings on the beauty, fitness, and intrinsic-excellence of virtue look indeed pretty enough upon paper; but I cannot in the view of them help thinking of what was said of the Mask in the fable, *O lepidum caput, sed cerebrum non habet!* Alas! the vain precepts of heathen philosophers, or the modern improvement of their miscalled christian disciples, are alike impotent to restrain the power of a corrupted nature. They have no influence to produce what they enjoin: they leave us, just as they found us, admiring and transgressing them.

Let us see then whether the Gospel of JESUS hath not more amply provided for the honour of GOD, and the obedience of his people; and, with the richest grace bestowed, demands and produces the most exemplary conversation.

“We are his workmanship, created in CHRIST
 “JESUS unto good works, which GOD hath
 “before ordained that we should walk in them.”

These words afford us a view of the state and conduct of every real christian.

I. The principal of his spiritual life.

II. The

II. The power communicated to him to enable him to walk and please God; and,

III. The way in which he desires to have his conversation; namely, the “good works which God hath before ordained that he should walk in them.”

I. The principal of all spiritual life is CHRIST. Until we are joined to the LORD, “the motions of sin which are in our members do work to bring forth fruit unto death (f).” Our fallen nature, with all the labour and pains which may be bestowed on it, will never cease to be a nature “dead in trespasses and sins (g).” We must be quickened before we can live; and live before we can “walk and please God. CHRIST is this quickning spirit (h).” Spiritual life is a new creation in him: therefore we are said to be “begotten, born again, made partakers of a divine nature, one spirit with the LORD, members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones (i).” As really as “in Adam we have died,” so really “in CHRIST must we be made alive (k).” Until we are so, it is impossible to do any good work: for

(f) Rom. vii. 6.

(g) Ephes. ii. 2.

(h) 1 Cor. xv. 45.

(i) 2 Pet. i. 4.

John iii. 3.

1 Cor. vi. 17.

Ephes. v. 30.

(k) 1 Cor. xv. 22.

“ as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, “ except ye abide in me (*l*).” There must be as real a union betwixt CHRIST and us, as between the members and the head, or between the root and the branches ; “ without CHRIST we “ can do nothing (*m*).” Until he dwell in us and we in him we cannot live unto GOD, no more than a limb can live separate from the body, or a branch bear fruit when severed from the tree. This is GOD’s work. In the second creation we are as much his *workmanship*, as matter was in the first. He must give the life he commands : “ I passed by thee in thy blood, “ and said unto thee, Live (*n*).” There is no more power in a natural man to do good works, than in “ *Ezekiel’s* dry bones (*o*)” to arise and stand upon their feet. GOD’s spirit must breathe ere we can live : this spirit is in its fulness resident in CHRIST. “ He quickneth whom he “ will (*p*) : he is at the right hand of GOD exalted, “ to give repentance unto his people (*q*).” His first act of grace towards us is his choice of us, then he draws us that we may follow him :

(*l*) John xv. 4.(*m*) John xv. 6.(*n*) Ezek. xvi. 6.(*o*) Ezek. xxxvii. 3.(*p*) John v. 21.(*q*) Acts v. 31.

“ that

“ that I may apprehend that for which I am
 “ also apprehended in CHRIST JESUS (r).”
 And in order hereunto, his first work *in us* is
 the enlightning our minds by his words to know
 him as our Redeemer and Saviour. He that
 “ caused the light to shine out of darkness,”
 doth as sovereignly shine into us “ to give us
 “ the light of the knowledge of his glory in the
 “ face of JESUS CHRIST (s).” Faith then, the
 bond of union on our part, embraces the pro-
 mises in him ; for the divine truth, when ac-
 companied with divine light, brings its own
 evidence along with it : “ we know and believe
 “ the love that GOD hath unto us.” By this
 faith we live, or rather, as the Apostle expresses
 it, “ CHRIST liveth in us :” for he is our life :
 “ all our fresh springs are in him.” From
 hence arises a wonderful difference in our state.
 “ We are passed from death unto life.” All
 our views, desires, dispositions, designs, are
 altered ; and this will in some gracious measure
 appear by those effects which naturally now
 flow from the new creation in CHRIST JESUS.

This deserves especially notice. It is men’s
 folly, that they are for attempting the *practice*

(r) Phil. iii. 12.

(s) 2 Cor. iv. 6.

without knowing the *principle* of holiness. Wash the *Ethiopian's* skin with all the water of the sea, and you will see the black unchanged. It is his nature. So is corruption yours. It is deeper rooted than the tawny hue of the *Ethiopian*, or the spots of the leopard. Take this one scripture: "If any man be in CHRIST, he is a new creature (t):" and there your way is open. You must be created anew in him, and then your heart will have the true and genuine image. You will "put on the new man, which, after GOD, is created in righteousness and true holiness (u)".

II. The power to put forth into act the life we receive, is derived from the same source. He not only prevents but follows us with the gifts of his grace; "worketh in us that we may have a good will, and worketh with us when we have the good will (x)."

The peculiar office of the Holy Ghost is said by our Church to be "the sanctifying the elect people of GOD (y)." And this he doth by representing to us in his Word the *obligations* we lie under to love a pardoning GOD, and communicating *power* to enable us to walk, and to please him.

[(t) 2 Cor. v. 17.

(u) Ephes. iv. 24.

(x) Article X.

(y) Catechism.

1. The Holy Ghost represents to us in the Word the *obligations* we are under to love and serve a pardoning GOD. He shews us how much we are in *duty* bound to do so: "For we
" are bought with a price, that we may glorify
" GOD in our bodies and in our spirits which
" are GOD's (z)." He hath the most undoubted right in and over us, who hath paid so dearly for us, as to give "his own blood" to redeem us.

This view of our state most powerfully engages us to answer the end of his purchase, by
" yielding ourselves, body, soul, and spirit, a
" living sacrifice to him, holy and acceptable,
" which is our reasonable service (a)." Indeed, what can be so *reasonable*, and therefore so *obligatory*, as that "he who gave himself for us,
" that he might redeem us from all iniquity,
" and purify to himself a peculiar people (b)," should thus be glorified in us, and by us?

2. This not only appears reasonable, but there is a "constraining power of love shed
" abroad in our hearts," engaging and enabling us to approve the things which are excellent. The Holy Ghost in the Scripture so represents

(z) 1 Cor. vi. 20.

(a) Rom. xii. 1.

(b) Titus ii. 14.

the love of CHRIST in his great salvation, that it constraineth us, *συμμετρεῖ*, *carrieth* us along with it as a mighty stream. For when this love is known and believed, its “breadth and length, “and depth and height” manifested in any measure to our hearts, *then* we cannot but love GOD in return, and desire to walk before him in newness of life. The influence of this principle of love to produce holiness in us is evident. This is the love of GOD, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous (*c*). But we can never reason ourselves into this love. It is the office of the Spirit not only to set before us the grounds of it in the character of a pardoning GOD, but to “direct our hearts into the love of GOD (*d*).” The Gospel becomes effectual, not merely by moral suasion, but by divine operation. This power habitually is ministered to us from CHRIST for the work of sanctification. “Out of his “fulness we receive (*e*).” Our works are begun, continued and ended in him. CHRIST (in whose hands the ministration of the Spirit is lodged), as the life of our souls, communicates to us life and love; and these dispose us

(*c*) 1 John v. 3.(*d*) Theff. iii. 5.(*e*) John i. 16.

to, and enable us for the practice of "righteousness and true holiness."

I would wish you never to lose sight of this source of our obedience. If we see not this, our mistakes will be endless; and our labour after newness of life only the more estrange us from it. We shall be building a *Babel* to confound ourselves; and if hereafter we should be undeceived, shall not only have our work to begin, but our wall built with untempered mortar to pull down also.

Which brings me,

III. To consider that practice of true holiness, which the soul "created in CHRIST JESUS is "ordained to walk in."

Holiness is "the conformity of the heart to "God." It is having our will like GOD's will, and our ways directed by the rule of our duty. It is the answer of that emphatical petition, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven (f)." As the proof of it goes through every the minutest action of our lives, the time would fail me to enumerate all the particulars wherein in heart and life it appears; in all holy desires and dispositions towards God, and in those

(f) Matt. vi. 10.

works of righteousness “which are good and “profitable unto men.” But it will be necessary to set before you some of its most striking parts, and beg you to judge yourselves thereby.

Let me however not be misunderstood in what I am about to speak. I affirm not that *every* true believer hath this state of perfect conformity unto God. I mean not to insinuate, that *any* ever did on earth attain to “be perfect as “our Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Nay, I must urge, as the sure detection of all vain pretenders to human perfection, that if any say he hath no sin, he is a liar, deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him. But I would advance this as a certain truth, that every redeemed soul who hath tasted that the LORD is gracious, doth in judgment approve, in heart desire, and amidst many temptations and much infirmity, habitually in his Christian course, pursue that shining path which JESUS trod, keeping that object in view, and esteeming it as the greatly-to-be desired attainment, and which will constitute a chief part of the heavenly blessedness, “to be holy as he that hath “called us his holy.”

If

If you are Christians then not “in word and
“in tongue, but in deed and in truth,”

(1.) You will have a hearty approbation of
the holy law of GOD. Though it cannot be a
covenant of life to you, it ceases not to be a
rule of obedience, and you will acknowledge it
to be “holy and just and good,” however con-
trary to your “carnal mind, and the law of
“your members which warreth against it (g).”
Far therefore from esteeming its prohibitions arbi-
trary, its commands severe, or its sanctions rigor-
ous, you will say with the Psalmist, “I esteem all
thy precepts concerning all things to be right (h).”
And this view will make you “delight in the law
“of GOD after the inner man (i).” You will
own GOD’s service to be the most perfect free-
dom and its own reward, and therefore your lan-
guage will be, “O that my ways were made so
“direct, that I might keep thy statutes (k) !”

(2.) You will desire to have a single eye to please
him. If you are CHRIST’s, you will have the
“simplicity which is in CHRIST.” An eye
directed straight forwards, and examining,
“what will the LORD have me to do ?” A

(g) Rom. vii. 23.

(h) Psal. cxix. 128.

(i) Rom. vii. 22.

(k) Psal. cxix. 5.

desire to please him in all things: an habitual regard to the good pleasure of his will, and a purpose of soul to follow him in the narrow way which leadeth unto life. For “he that saith “he abideth in him, ought himself to walk as “CHRIST also walked (*l*).” And where the is the case, you will find that victory over the world which faith gives; and a growing purpose never to turn to the right hand or to the left after any of the *golden baits*, which pleasure, gain or honour may strew around you, in order to catch your eye and ensnare your heart from GOD as your portion. In consequence of this you will seek to “keep a conscience void of “offence towards GOD and towards man (*m*);” it will be your study and prayer to do so. You can therefore habitually *allow* yourself in the commission of no known sin, or the omission of any known duty, but inquiring “what is that good “and perfect and acceptable will of GOD (*n*).” you will be not only “a hearer, but, com- “passed as you are with infirmity, according to “your measure, a doer of it (*o*).” You will be able to appeal to the heart-searching GOD, that

(*l*) 1 John ii. 6.(*m*) Acts xxiv. 16.(*n*) Rom. xii. 2.(*o*) James i. 25.

“his law is your delight (p).” Approved as excellent, you will have confidence towards him, in the consciousness of an unfeigned intention to please him; and it will be a testimony for good to your conscience, when you can therefore say, “Search me, O LORD, and try
“the ground of my heart; prove me and examine my thoughts: look well if there be any
“way of wickedness in me; and lead me in the
“way everlasting (q).” Yea, it will be the very “joy and rejoicing of your heart” to be assured, “that in simplicity and godly sincerity,
“not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace
“of God, you have your conversation in the
“world (r).”

(3.) You will feel with a tender sensibility whatever you apprehend may grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Your conscience will be as the apple of your eye. Have you never felt the acute pain that but a particle of dust occasions, when irritating the coats of that tender organ, and observed the carefulness you used to prevent such an accident, or your solicitude to remove it? Something like this is the sensibility in the soul of a believer with regard to sin. The eye

(p) Psal. cxix. 70. (q) Psal. cxxxix. 23. 24. (r) 2 Cor. i. 12.

of his spiritual mind cannot suffer *beams* there. Presumptuous sins cannot habitually be indulged, approved, delighted in. If at any time such a sin gets dominion over him, it darkens his soul, brings bondage on the conscience, and makes its dire effects to be long and bitterly felt and lamented. But a *mote* will be grievous to the holy soul. He counts nothing little which is offensive to the pure "eyes of that God with whom he hath to do." Hence the very thoughts of his heart are under restraint. The inward imagination of evil afflicts him: "If," says he, "I regard iniquity within, shall not God search it out? For he knoweth the very secrets of the heart (*s*)."
He would wish to have his heart a temple cleansed from all *filthiness*, consecrated for the divine inhabitant, who condescends there to take up his abode.

(4.) You will, as the effect of this, be careful "to abstain from all appearances of, and approaches to evil (*t*). can a man take fire in his bosom, and his cloths not be burned (*u*)?" No more may you presume to put yourself into the way of temptation. The vices themselves

(*s*) Psal. xliv. 21. (*t*) 1 Theff. v. 22. (*u*) Prov. vi. 27.

may shock you, when the steps which lead to them appear innocent. It is often said, "What harm can there be in this?" When, in fact, all the harm which usually overwhelms us comes from small and unperceived beginnings. "The beginning of sin is as the breaking out of water (x)." If once a small breach is made, every drop which passes through widens it. The *innocent amusements*, as they are called, the *necessary* business of the world, and *customary* civilities of it, seem very allowable, nay laudable; and yet I may venture to affirm, that more souls perish by what appears to be lawful, than by what is acknowledged to be vicious. If you would be pure in heart therefore, the pleasures of sense, however innocent; the things of the world, however needful; and the respect of it, however desirable, must be regarded with a jealous eye. We may not "go out of the world;" nay, are allowed to use the world as not abusing it, but need beware of seeking our portion in its delights, our riches in its gain, our honour in its distinction: a growing deadness to these in affection is the

(x) Prov. xvii. 21.

desirable attainment, that thus, though "in
"the world, we may not be of the world."

(5.) You will desire to be growing up unto the
measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST.
Wherever a soul truly loves GOD, he must desire
to love him more. A heart united to JESUS never
thinks he can love him too much, or serve him
too well: but he aspires after higher degrees;
"forgetting the things which are behind, and
reaching forward to those that are before (y)." "It is true that through the frailty of our na-
"ture we cannot always stand upright;" "we
"know but in part (z);" "we love but in part;
we obey but in part; but this our state of
imperfection is our grief. We would be like
GOD. We would be no longer ungrateful to him.
We would be "holy in love as he is holy."
This is the spring of all those ardent prayers,
that jealous self-examination, that desire of
reproof, that serious inquiry into GOD's mind
and will, in which the flourishing Christian is
habitually exercised, and thus going on unto
perfection encreaseth with the increase of GOD.

(6) You will aspire after absolute and intire
perfection in heaven. Heaven is the region of

(y) Phil. iii. 13.

(z) 1 Cor. xiii. 9.

holiness:

holiness: it is of the essence of that happy state, that there all "that is in part is done away," and that which is perfect is come (a). We "therefore that are in this tabernacle do groan earnestly, desiring to be absent from the body, that we may be present with the Lord (b). For then seeing him as he is, we shall be like him (c)." The man after God's own heart shews how he was, and we ought to be affected: "My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God; when shall I come to appear in the presence of God (d)?" The chased roe, panting before its pursuers, and parched with heat and thirst, longed not more for the cooling stream, than his soul appears to long for this blessed state of happiness. All besides was little in his eye; his crown, his victories, his wealth, his fame, his honours, were trifles compared to this; he was content to part with them; he placed not his happiness in them; they were not his portion; one great desire filled his soul; and it was this, to "awake up in God's likeness, and then he knew he should be for ever satisfied with it (e)."

(a) 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

(b) 2 Cor. v. 4, 5, 6.

(c) 1 John iii. 2.

(d) Psal. xli. 2.

(e) Psal. xvii. 15.

Happy will it be for you, brethren, if such as I have described be the temper of your soul. You may then be assured you are alive to God; or in the language of St. Paul, "you live, yet not you, but CHRIST liveth in you (f)". This is *true holiness*, and as distinct from all the daubings of pharisaical outside or hypocritical delusion, as the genuine brilliant differs from imitative paste. These are the works which "God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

I would conclude at present with these two cautions:

1. Beware of mistaking mere external works for true holiness. Holiness is seated in the heart; every act receives its goodness from the principle from which it flows, and the end to which it is directed. The external works of the generally esteemed devout, decent and charitable, are usually as far from being acts of real holiness as any of the enormities of those who proclaim their shame as avowed children of disobedience: they proceed from as unrenewed hearts, from as unchristian tempers, and are directed to as unsanctified ends.

(f) Gal. ii. 20.

You

You may attend your church twice on a Sunday. You may go on week-days too. You may frequent the Sacrament. You may say prayers in your house and alone. You may read the psalms and lessons for the day. You may be “no extortioner or unjust.” You may be in many things unlike other men; neither given to swear, nor drink, nor lewdness, nor extravagance. You may be a tender parent, a careful master, and what the world calls an honest man: yea, you may withal be very liberal to the poor; be regarded in the world as a pattern of piety and charity, and respected as one of the *best* sort of people in it; and yet, with all this, be the very character which, “though highly
“esteemed amongst men, is an abomination in
“in the sight of GOD (g)”.

For if you have never seen your “desperate-
“ly wicked heart,” been united to CHRIST by faith, renounced your own righteousness to be found in him, and receive from him newness of life; if you know not experimentally what is meant by “fellowship with the Father and his
“son JESUS CHRIST;” if your devotion hath not been inspired “by faith which worketh by

(g) Luke xvi. 15.

“love;”

“love;” if your worship hath not been “in spirit and in truth;” from a real sense of your wants, and an earnest desire and expectation of receiving from him “in whom all fulness dwells:” if this hath not been your case, your devotions have been unmeaning ceremony; your book not your heart hath spoken! and instead of the fervent effectual prayer of a righteous man, your babblings have been no better than the sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. “Bring no more vain oblations (b).” Though you should thus read and kneel, and pray all the days of your life, you would never have offered one spiritual service. These your very attendances on forms and ordinances are your delusion and condemnation.

Your *decent conduct* proceeds not from a sense of “the love of GOD which is in JESUS CHRIST our LORD.” You have never felt any thing of its constraining influence; nor have you a heart really hating iniquity as such. But open vices may be inconvenient to you, may blast your reputation, affect your business, or hurt your pride (for pride is at the bottom of all self-made holiness), and therefore you abstain from them.

(b) *Isai. i. 13.*

While

While these two things you do, you love this present world as your portion, desire its esteem, its gain or its gratifications; and you hate the image of GOD in the children of his grace. You dislike their self-denied conduct: you cannot bear the light of their holy lives; you are provoked when they would unsettle you from your false bottom of formality. You think you are good enough already. You seem to fear being *over-righteous* more than the “blasphemy against “the HOLY GHOST.” And if this be so, believe it, you are an utter stranger to vital godliness. Your heart is unhumbled and unholy; and all your ornamental shew is but gilding the coffin of a corpse, or whiting your sepulchre. “You must be born again (i),” if you would “bring forth fruit unto GOD.”

Nor think that you are *charitable*, if the love of JESUS and his brethren be not the influential motive of your alms. A naturally liberal heart—tenderness of constitution affected with the sight or tale of misery—a desire of being thought well of—or rather the fear of being thought niggardly—may draw from you a pittance of your store; or some more considerable bene-

(i) John iii. 7.

faction in your life—or legacy at your death may be dispensed as you hope “to cover the “multitude of sins*.” But is this charity? Alas! you might not only give your superfluities, but “bestow *all* your goods to feed the “poor,” you might even “give your body to “be burned for them,” and yet be utterly destitute of charity (*k*). If self-seeking, self-pleasing, or self-ends guide you (and guide you they must, “until the love of GOD be by the HOLY “GHOST shed abroad in your heart (*l*))? though you had defrauded others of the money you have given, you had not more effectually transgressed against the law of love.

Let every soul look well within. It is easy to be deceived; thousands are so “The form “of godliness” many hold; “the power of it” few. Be ye of those few.

2. As far removed from real holiness are they who have only gleaned up from men right notions of Religion, but whose hearts have not yet been influenced by them. It is a very common case this. By education we may have had true principles instilled into our understandings:

* See the note in the fifth Sermon, page 97.

(*k*) 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

(*l*) Rom. v. 5.

or afterwards by our connections, acquaintance and attachment to those who profess godliness, we may have learnt their mode of speaking, and adopted their sentiments; and this too from a speculative conviction of the truth. Hence we may run to hear the Gospel, contend for the Ministers of it, know how duties should be performed, discover the vanity of formality, be ready to rebuke the Pharisee, yea, have a zeal for the truth, even to suffer for it persecution and loss. And all this may be accompanied with the appearance of spirituality, with seeming fervors of devotion, a readiness to pray with others, and human gifts of knowledge and utterance. Withal, the conduct may be reformed, outwardly irreproachable; and yet the heart be neither truly for nor with GOD. Yea farther, it is certainly more than possible even to have been the means of saving others souls and to lose our own: and after all, to be only not far from the kingdom of GOD and never enter into it; “almost but not altogether Christians.”

We may not have hated sin as sin, and because GOD hates it; nor loved holiness as holiness, and because GOD delights in it: our views may have been *merely* selfish, to avoid Hell or to gain Heaven; (views right enough

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in their proper place) whilst at the bottom of our hearts we have not been actuated by a desire of God's glory ; influenced by virtue derived from the living head ; nor be constrained in the beginning, continuance and end of our conduct by the real experience of our SAVIOUR's love

Self-deceit is deeply rooted in our hearts. We cannot be too jealous over them. The most holy will be the most inquisitive ; most careful to fix their eye "on JESUS the author and finisher of their faith, that they may be enjoying abiding peace in him, and deriving daily help from him, and thus bringing forth "those works of faith and labours of love" which He will remember in the day of his appearance and glory.

S E R M O N X I I .

The Fruits of the Spirit.

EPHESIANS v. 9.

*For the fruit of the spirit is all goodness and
righteousness.*

WHEN we were infants, we were by baptism admitted into the bosom of the Church ; and in profession appeared disciples of the religion of JESUS ; engaging by the mouths of our sponsors, as soon as we came to years of discretion, “ to walk worthy of our high vocation and calling.” The congregation prayed for us, “ that all carnal affections might die in us ; and that all things belonging to the spirit might live and grow in us ^(m).” The continued assistance of the Holy Ghost was implored to enable us to be faithful to the vows then made ; and our God-fathers and God-mothers were then solemnly admonished to remind us of our promise and profession, which was to “ follow the example of our Saviour CHRIST,

(m) Baptismal Service.

“and to be made like unto him (*n*).” It becomes us, therefore now seriously to examine, whether we are walking according to these engagements. Else, “our circumcision becomes uncircumcision;” our baptism can profit us nothing, if we are found in unbelief and disobedience.—In that case it would be evident that we continue, as we were born, “children of wrath (*o*),” and inherit a curse instead of a blessing. Here then is the question: Am I now a child of GOD? and it is resolvable by another, “Am I led by the Spirit of GOD? For as many as are led by the Spirit of GOD, they are the sons of GOD (*p*).” And these leadings are evident by the fruits. “The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness.” If this be really produced in any measure, well; else we are like the ingrafted branch which never incorporated with the tree, “dried up and withered, whose only use is to be gathered and cast into the fire and burned (*q*).”

Let every man try what spirit he is of. “Many false spirits are gone forth into the world (*r*).” There is a fallen spirit, boasting

(*n*) Baptismal Exhortation. (*o*) Ephes. ii. 3. (*p*) Rom. viii. 14.

(*q*) John xv. 6.

(*r*) 1 John iv.

of moral excellence, when in reality "enmity against GOD (*s*). There is "a spirit of the "world (*t*)," well received and generally well spoken of, which is in diametrical opposition to CHRIST and his Gospel. And there is a spirit of darkness, who assumes "the garb of an angel of light (*u*)," and fathers his impositions on those "who have no pleasure in the truth, "but have pleasure in unrighteousness (*x*). Hence, some have pretended to the guidance of the spirit of GOD, whose lives were "earthly, "sensual, devilish;" and others, whilst they boasted of extraordinary impulses and communications, have "ended in the flesh. We must "try the spirits whether they are of GOD (*y*). By "their fruits ye shall know them (*z*). The "fruits of the Spirit are these, love, joy, peace, "long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, "meekness, temperance (*a*). These none but GOD's Spirit ever did or can produce: *these*, wherever they are, radically overturn the powers of darkness, and bring with them the full evidence of their divine origin. "This hath GOD "done (*b*)."

(*s*) Rom. viii. 7.(*t*) 1 Cor. ii. 12.(*u*) 2 Cor. xi. 14.(*x*) 2 Thess. ii. 12.(*y*) 1 John iv. 1.(*z*) Matt. vii. 20.(*a*) Gal. v. 21, 22, 23.(*b*) Psal. lxiv. 9.

We will examine these fruits a little distinctly, for in them goodness and righteousness consist; observing only that it is not the measure of our attainments in these, but the reality of possession that proves us born of GOD. The Babe in CHRIST hath as truly the divine nature, as the fathers who by long experience and growth in grace have their spiritual faculties more enlarged, and their senses exercised more clearly to discern both good and evil.

1. *Love.* The “first and great commandment of the law is, The love of GOD (c); “and the next and like unto it is, To love our “neighbour as ourselves (d):” both these manifest themselves to be in the hearts of the children of GOD. *Love* appears in the regard shewn to the object on which it fixes. These are *esteem of, desire after, delight in and conformity with it.* The real Christian hath his heart truly attached to GOD in CHRIST. A reconciled GOD is the object of his reverential esteem. “Whom have I in “heaven but thee?” His *desires* rise up after him, as his portion. “There is nothing upon “earth I desire in comparison with thee (e).” his he manifests by his diligence to maintain

(c) Matt. xxii. 37. (d) Matt. xxii. 39. (e) Pf. lxxiii. 25.

communion with him in *Prayer, Meditation, the Word and Sacraments*. He wishes to *delight* in God and a sense of his love above all earthly things. "My soul shall be joyful in the LORD (f) :
 "yea, I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
 "my soul shall be joyful in my GOD (g)." He seeks *conformity* to him as the highest pinnacle of blessedness. "To grow up into him in all
 "things, who is the head, even CHRIST (b)." Doth this character in any measure suit you ? Is this your real experience, desire and prayer ? Thus the Spirit works in every believer. And to his neighbour the same spirit begets *love* without dissimulation ; evident in every tender expression of it towards his soul or body. "Re-
 "joicing with those that rejoice, and weep-
 "ing with those that weep (i) ; ready to dis-
 "bute, willing to communicate (k) to the ne-
 "cessities of the indigent ; pitying their misery,
 "patient under their perverseness ; pardoning
 "their provocations, bearing with their infir-
 "mities ;" consulting their wants and studying to relieve them : in short, by instruction, admonition, reproof, consolation, desirous to advance

(f) Psal. xxxv. 9

(g) Isai. lxi. 10.

(b) Ephes. iv. 15.

(i) Rom. xii. 15.

(k) 1 Tim. vi. 18.

their most important interests, those of their immortal souls. This is *Love*.

But can ~~no~~ man be under the guidance of God's Spirit, who habitually affects other things as his portion in preference to God in CHRIST, and who seeks not to walk in the exercise of fervent charity? Certainly no. CHRIST saith, "He that loveth any thing more than me is not worthy of me (l). And "we are commanded to be ready, if need be, to lay down even our lives for the "brethren (m)." So that the matter comes to a short issue; What hath GOD's word determined? But where is this divine temper in any measure seen thus in exercise? Who doth thus love GOD and his brother? Is not this reducing the children of GOD within a very narrow compass? True. But it reduces them only to the Scripture declarations. *Nominally* the children of GOD are numerous enough, *really* they are few. Be assured, if a man have not this spirit of love, he belongs not to CHRIST. "He that loveth not, knoweth not GOD, for "God is love."

(l) Matt. x. 37

(m) 1 John iii. 16.

2. *Joy.* They have very mistaken notions of the Gospel, who think the religion of JESUS is a melancholly service. A happy *freedom* from slavish and distressing fear, is the portion of those who live in faith that worketh by love. The joys of sin are vain, wicked, transitory : yea all the joys of earth and sense, even in lawful things, when sought as a portion, quickly change into ceaseless and remediless sorrows ; but the fruit of the spirit is true joy—a “joy in the HOLY GHOST,” flowing immediately from the fountain of all blessing—an holy joy, tending to promote the purity of our souls : yea it is a joy “unspeakable and full “of glory (n).” We “rejoice in the LORD “as all our salvation, and all our desire ;” in *ourselves*, beholding the grace of our GOD—in every *present* dispensation of divine Providence : “for all things work together for “good (o) :” in every *future* prospect ; “re- “joicing in hope of the glory of GOD (p).” What a joy is this ! possessed independent of the world, and all the things of it. A joy that even in *afflictions*, in *temptations*, in *ser-*

(n) 1 Pet. i. 8.

(o) Rom. viii. 28.

(p) Rom. v. 2.

rows, in reproaches (q), abides unchangeably the same.

Nor must I omit the peculiarity of this joy, as it regards our brethren. Their prosperity will be our delight, as "one member of the body shares in the honour put on, another (r)." The envious, selfish dispositions of the natural man are mortified, and we can share in their happiness as our own. Thus our joy abounds, and still the divine Comforter enlarges the measure of it, till it is completed in glory.

3. *Peace.* It is the spirit's work to "create peace." And this he doth by "shining into our hearts through the word, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST (s)." He testifies of CHRIST, brings home the record to our souls, that GOD in him is reconciled, and "gives us peace in believing (t) ;" paying us, as it were the legacy our dying master left us. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you (u)." This "peace passeth all understanding (x) ;" and the possession of

(q) 2 Cor. vii. 4. James i. 2. 2 Cor. vi. 10. Acts v. 41.

(r) 1 Cor. xii. 26. (s) 2 Cor. iv. 6. (t) Rom. xv. 13.

(u) John xiv. 27. (x) Phil. iv. 7.

it keeps our souls serene amidst the changes and storms of this mortal life. And now admitted into "that kingdom which is righteousness and peace (z)," the mild dispositions of the Prince of Peace appear in our conduct. To cultivate peace with all men is our desire here upon earth; yea, though we often dwell with those "who, when we speak for peace, make them ready to battle (a)." We wish to avoid every occasion of dispute and angry contention; desiring to give no "offence in any thing (b); as far as lieth in us, living peaceably with all men (c);" receding in many instances from our right, rather than break this bond of unity, and often quietly suffering rather than seek a litigious redress: where division hath been sown, the first to seek reconciliation; desiring to re-unite those who are at enmity, "speaking those soft words which turn away wrath (d);" using every kind office which can sweeten the hearts imbittered with variance. Thus the Holy Ghost leads. What a different spirit from that which is in the world! There hatred,

(z) Rom. xiv. 17.

(a) Psal. cxx. 7.

(b) 1 Cor. x. 32.

(c) Rom. xii. 18.

(d) Prov. xv. 1.

variance, strife, emulation reign ; and slander, detraction and malice cast about the firebrands of dissension, seeking to "separate very friends." Return, O Prince of Peace, return ! Diffuse this gracious spirit in the midst of us ; teach us to copy thy good-will towards men !

4. *Long-suffering.* This is the very character of GOD. It is a part of the divine nature. Where this dwells, there GOD's spirit dwells. And how greatly shall we need to exercise it ? "In the world we shall have "tribulation (*e*)."
It cannot be otherwise, whilst here we dwell among lions ; "among "men, whose lips are set on fire, whose teeth "are spears and arrows, and their tongue a "sharp sword (*f*)."
Injuries, unkindness, and provocations will daily beset us. Our nature on this would swell and rage, "re-
"turning evil for evil, and railing for railing."
But the soul taught of GOD, hath learnt a different lesson ; "forbearing one "another, and forgiving one another, as GOD "for CHRIST's sake hath forgiven us (*g*) :"
and this "not until seven times, but until

(*e*) John xvi. 33. (*f*) Psal. lvii. 4. (*g*) Ephes. iv. 32.

"seventy

“seventy times seven (*b*).” It is true, we shall find a corrupted heart rising up and saying, “Do I not well to be angry?” But we shall seek to suppress these perverse “motions of sin in our members;” and set a guard, not only on the words of our tongue, or the features of our countenance, but on the very thoughts of our heart; that so, “not only evil speaking, but all bitterness and anger and wrath may be put away from us, as becometh saints (*i*).” If we meet with ill usage from men without, we shall forgive, pity and pray for them. We shall not so much as wish their hurt. We shall remember, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the LORD (*k*).” If we are crossed at home; and in our own families usually lies the chief exercise of our long-suffering) if we find those who are under us perverse, self-willed, stubborn, undutiful; or those set over us imperious, haughty, and capriciously out of humour; we shall seek to overcome the one by patience, forbearance and kindness towards them; and the other, by that “yielding which

(*b*) Matt. xviii. 22.

(*i*) Ephes. iv. 31.—v. 3.

(*k*) Rom. xii. 19.

“pacifieth

“pacieth wrath (*l*) ;” by that submissiveness, that silence, which extinguishes the coals of anger. “Fathers, provoke not your children “to wrath (*m*) ; servants, obey your masters, “not answering again (*n*) ;” are the express marks St. *Paul* instances of the exercise of this blessed temper. To walk thus will shew that we have “received the grace of GOD in “truth,” and drank into his spirit, “who “endured such contradiction of sinners against “himself (*o*), yet opened not his mouth,” except in pity and prayer for his murderers. Need I remark how little this spirit is seen in the world, where rage, impatience and self-will disturb the earth, and raise perpetual storms !

But are none who pretend to divine light and love, as impatient and fretful as those whom they pharisaically stile their *carnal neighbours* ? Perhaps they are. But profession does not always imply possession. There is much self-deceit and delusion in the world, and a hope that is but “the hope of the hypocrite which “perisheth (*p*).”

(*l*) Ecclef. x. 4.(*m*) Ephes. vi. 4.(*n*) Titus ii. 9.(*o*) Heb. xii. 3.(*p*) Job viii. 13.

5. *Meekness, Gentleness*: these are nearly allied. If they be considered separately, *Meekness* may intimate the temper, and *Gentleness* the expression of it in the conduct. This was what the blessed JESUS recommended so strongly to his disciples imitation: "Learn of me, "for I am meek and lowly of heart (q); and "all who are his sheep hear his voice, and "follow him (r);" and where the temper is thus kind and softened, gentleness will speak in every word and action. Bitterness, or clamour, or fierce disputes will be forbid our lips, the law of kindness will dwell there; and words, soft as descending snows, drop from the good treasure of the heart. In the life it will be seen; not in the ceremonious compliments of the lip and knee, not in the mere sounding professions of respect, not in false civilities, which have no meaning, or a bad one; but in the ingenuous openness of the countenance; the simplicity and sincerity of the conduct; and the unaffected benevolence towards those who we know dislike and injure us. And at home especially it will make us kind and courteous to all about us, tender over them, assidu-

(q) Matt. xi. 29.

(r) John x. 27.

ous to serve them, and pleased with the task. I know no part of a christian's conduct which makes him appear more amiable than the exercise of these graces, and which so effectually disarms the malice of "those who cruelly, disdainfully, and despitefully, speak against him (s)." Nor is the absence of this spirit but among the sad proofs of an unrenewed heart; and to be a lion in our house, and frantic among our servants, is as much an evidence of sin's dominion, as to swear or lie.

6. *Goodness*. To this word many lay pretensions, but its meaning few understand, and fewer practise. Were you to hear a man of this world describe the character of *Goodness*, he would represent it as consisting in taking care of what is called the main chance—advancing somewhat in the world—paying every man his due—doing no harm; and being an honest man. And so good he flatters himself he is. Again, the goodness of pharisaical formality consists in an *exterior* of decency, devotion and charity. The regular appearance at church—or the daily service at home—with something bestowed to the relief of the ne-

(s) Psa. xxxi. 18.

cessitous—

cessitous — afford a *righteousness*, which, from the concurring testimony of the world, it would seem almost presumption to question. But I have before laboured to expose the folly of these pretences. The *honesty* of the worldling, and the *forms* of the devotee, have just as much *genuine goodness* in them, as the love of the world hath of heavenly-mindedness, and ignorance and pride of humility and spiritual understanding. But there is a *real goodness* which is a fruit of the Spirit, which it becomes each soul to cultivate. A *goodness*, not wrought by and out of ourselves; (for “in us, that is, in our flesh, dwelleth no “good thing (t);”) but the emanation of that divine nature of which, through the HOLY GHOST, we have been made partakers. It consists in “the approbation and delight of “the heart to that law of GOD which is holy, “and just, and good (u).” It appears in the uniform pursuit of “whatsoever things are “excellent and of good report;” engages the heart to self-denial, spirituality, and humble walking with GOD. It urges us to seek the salvation of all men, and prompts us to every

(t) Rom. vii. 18.

(u) Rom. vii. 12.

labour

labour of love for their souls or bodies. Love is the principle from which it springs; the honour of JESUS, and the good of mankind, the great end to which it is directed. A *goodness*, which outside religion hath nothing to do with, and the world cannot receive; but in which the soul that is in CHRIST must be daily exhorted to abide and abound.

7. *Faith*. This is "the fruit of the Spirit." The word *faith* in Scripture admits of different interpretations. Here it stands for *veracity* and *fidelity*: *veracity* in all our words and promises. So far as we are in him who is the faithful and true witness, we shall intend to "speak the truth from our heart (x)." We shall abhor "lying lips and a deceitful tongue (y)." We shall use "no flattering speeches (z);" no cloke of guile; but speak the truth as in his presence, "who searcheth the heart and the reins." A christian's word is sacred: the spirit of truth guides him. Need I observe then whose spirit they follow, who think good-breeding binds them to hypocrisy, or who pretend the business of the world could never be carried on without dissimulation? That to ask

(x) Psal. xv. 2.

(y) Psal. cxx. 2.

(z) 1 Theff. ii. 5.

more than they intend to take, to commend their merchandise above its real value, is allowable in trade. So true is the son of *Sirach's* observation, "As the nail sticketh fast between
"the joining of the stones, so doth lying be-
"tween buying and selling (*a*). These are of
"their father the devil, and the works of their
"father they will do. He was a liar from the
"beginning (*b*)."

Fidelity in our engagements is here included in faith. We shall be "true and just in all
"our dealings;" "not slothful in busi-
"ness (*c*);" not needing another's eye to quicken our diligence—true to the confidence reposed in us—fulfilling punctually whatever we have engaged for, though we are losers by the bargain—ready to pay what we owe at the time stipulated—and acting towards others, as, if our situations were changed, we should, according to truth, expect of them. Why are there so many complaints of knavery, idleness, and imposition? Why can you scarcely go into a shop where you must not guard against being cheated? or employ a workman who will not neglect your business unless your eye is over him?

(*a*) Eccus. xiii. 8. (*b*) John viii. 44. (*c*) Rom. xii. 11.

It is because the heart is a stranger to the grace of GOD, and is destitute of that “fruit of “the Spirit which is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.”

8. *Temperance.* “If you walk after the “Spirit, you will not fulfil the lusts of the “flesh (d).” As “your conversation will be “in heaven,” you will study to be temperate in the use of all things upon earth. If you possess abundance, you will “use this world “as not abusing it (e).” If your station be distinguished in life, you will not be conformed to the sinful customs and fashions of the world. “The pride of life, you know, “is not of the Father, but is of the world (f).” You will not measure your temperance by what others do, but by what your Bible marks out to you. If you do not abound in this world’s goods, your desires will be moderate. Having “food and raiment, you will pray to be there- “with content.” A little will serve a pilgrim on his travels: our treasure is reserved for us in heaven. The cravings of corrupt appetite you will daily endeavour to mortify. You will not only abhor that “surfeiting and drunken-

(d) Gal. v. 16.

(e) 1 Cor. vii. 31.

(f) 1 John ii. 11.

“nefs

"ness, that chambering and wantonness," which debases men into brutes; but will set a guard over the first motions of those "fleshly lusts which war against the soul (g)." When you *eat*, it will be for nourishment, not for gluttony; and you will *drink* to quench your thirst, not to inflame your passions; "making no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof (b)." You will seek to keep yourself pure—not only abstaining from forbidden gratifications, but using those that are lawful with a holy moderation—not going so far as you might, lest you should be led to exceed the boundary prescribed, and fall into intemperance. Knowing how corrupt your nature is; how prone to lust; how riveted to the world; how fond of vanities; jealousy should be ever on the watch, and take the alarm on the approach or appearance of excess. Thus you will "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise (i)."

Let me just hint, that to have the heart fixed on the vanities and sinful fashions of the world—to be anxiously engaged in the pursuit of gain—to indulge the flesh to excess in its

(g) 1 Pet. ii. 11.

(b) Rom. xiii. 14.

(i) Ephes. v. 15.

cravings

cravings after meat, or drink, or sleep, or apparel—to be at no pains to remove the provocation to intemperance, and to pamper, instead of beating down the body; these are sad proofs that such a soul “is sensual, not having the “spirit (k).”

These now are the tempers, and *this* the conduct, in which “the fruit of the Spirit in all “goodness and righteousness” appears. And every servant of our Saviour need frequently and seriously examine his ways. Many, even of those who profess a *spiritual* walk, deceive themselves with the vainest hopes; and though they continue under the habitual dominion of worldliness, selfishness, fretfulness and indulgence, will not be persuaded that they have neither “been baptised into CHRIST, nor put “on CHRIST.”

May the spirit of grace be to them a spirit of conviction, whilst they see the unsuitableness of their hearts and lives to the fruits of genuine righteousness!

And should not you and I, brethren, be much humbled, that these fruits, though really possessed, abound no more in us? Surely they

who have the tenderest and most awakened consciences, will be most affected with the view of their short comings; be led out of themselves to their great covenant-head, for peace to their consciences through faith in his blood and righteousness—and as all fulness of the spirit dwells in him, be stirred up importunately to cry for fresh communications of power and grace to bring forth more fruit. If this effect be wrought in you, such fervent effectual prayer will be a present evidence to you, that “the spirit of GOD, who helpeth our infirmities,” is with you as a spirit of supplication; and an *earnest* that he will be in you as a “spirit of power, strengthening you with all might in the inner man (l),” to bring forth those “fruits unto holiness, the end of which is everlasting life (m).”

(l) Ephes. iii. 16.

(m) Rom. vi. 22.

S E R M O N XIII.

The Necessity of personal Holiness.

HEBREWS xii. 14.

Without holiness no man shall see the LORD.

AMONG the various sects which have arisen, disturbing the peace of the Church and debasing the purity of the Gospel, no error hath more effectually struck at the root than theirs who pervert the most glorious truths of God to establish a system of lewdness and licentiousness. *Antinomians* in practice there have been in every age; in none I fear, more than the present: and it is no wonder, therefore, that a corrupted heart hath perverted many, and brought their sentiments into a conformity with their conduct. We naturally believe what we desire. The merest shadow of an argument will pass when prejudice hath blinded the eyes. Hence, because such as I am speaking of “have
“ no pleasure in the truth, but have pleasure in
“ unrighteousness, God hath given them over
“ to

“to strong delusions to believe a lie (n).” The most life-giving promises they pervert, and from the glorious grace of our God they would even take occasion to sin. In the mean time they avow a confidence of safety greater than that of other men. Their danger therefore is more imminent, and their damnation more inevitable. If any such should hear these words, or cast their eyes on these lines, I would beg them not to be hasty in their censures, but simply weigh the following arguments for personal Holiness, and not reject them if they are conclusive.

I have endeavoured to shew you in some measure the *nature* of Holiness, its principles and practice, and the particular fruits which grow and flourish wherever the heart is vitally united to CHRIST the living vine. Let no man accuse of a dangerous tendency principles which lead to such a conversation. If the enemies of the Gospel will effectually confute it, as they pretend to do, let them produce from other principles a practice that will bear this test, and hath such marks of divinity stamped upon it. It were enough to make a man smile (if the subject was not too serious) to hear the jealousy of those

(*) 2 Theff. ii. 11.

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who

who have not experimentally “so much as “known if there be any HOLY GHOST ;” and whose lives are wholly governed by the interests of flesh and sense, testifying their apprehensions about the decay of morality, and their fears lest these doctrines of Grace, which enable a believer, in some gracious measure, to “walk as “CHRIST also walked,” and actually are seen to have this tendency universally on those who truly embrace them, should make good works to be neglected, or considered as unnecessary. Should the moralist, whether Deist, Arian, Socinian or Orthodox, consider the truths which have been laid down, he will perhaps be found, with all his zeal for works, to have exceeded the professed Antinomian in true Holiness hardly so much as one *Ethiopian* exceeds his fellow in complexion. Whilst, sure I am, as many as are believers indeed will habitually feel the force of the obligations lying upon them, and by their conduct shew forth a spirituality of temper and holiness of life, that may confound at least, if it doth not convince those who speak evil of their good conversation in CHRIST.

Before I enter upon the subject, that I may not be misunderstood, or afflict those whom GOD hath not afflicted, I would premise two points :

1. That

1. That when I speak of the necessity of personal Holiness, I mean not to insinuate that any attainments of ours, or measure of Grace received, is necessary to justify us before God; for I have before proved that "he justifieth the **"UNGODLY."** Neither is it urged as the title to eternal glory. This stands entirely upon the holiness of another, "That obedience of One, by which the many sons of God are made in his fight perfectly and completely righteous." But tho' our justification before God is sure, and our righteousness in CHRIST everlastingly the same, yet it is ever urged upon us in the Scripture, as necessary to prove our Faith by our works—to let our light shine before others—to glorify GOD in our body and spirit, which are his—and to maintain good works that we may be profitable unto men.

2. Tho' holiness is a necessary consequence which flows from the belief of the truth, yet I presume not to mark out any measures of attainment, I argue only for the reality of the thing. The most advanced in grace will have abundant occasions to bow into the dust, and be ashamed of many things in which we all offend: And every real disciple of JESUS have cause to say, on every retrospect, "forgetting the things that

are behind I reach to those which are before." Our short comings should not discourage us; "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins;" and the babe that as new born desires the sincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby, shews as evidently the life of grace, as those who are called young men, or fathers, from their more advanced knowledge, experience, and spiritual conflicts.

These things premised, I am to shew you the absolute necessity of personal holiness. And I shall endeavour to do it from the following arguments. May the spirit of Holiness make them effectual to the edification of all who hear them!

First, It is one great design of God's eternal purpose and choice that we should be *holy*. There are innumerable disputes about the deep things of God's election and fore-knowledge, which, through the heat and bitterness wherewith they have been managed, too frequently have afforded matter for questions, rather than ministered godly edifying. Secret things belong unto God (o). We had best, at first, but distantly regard the deep points of God's predestination

(o) Deut. xxix. 29.

and election, and beginning with what is plainer, advance by degrees; truths received will open farther mysteries, and experience, examination, and prayer, lead us farther within the vail. And when we come to heaven, the scheme of God's eternal counsels will be fully known to us. But whatever predestination or election there be, or be not, this is certainly God's eternal decree, that the people of his grace should "be holy."^(p) "For this he hath chosen us in CHRIST before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love (p)." This predestination must be admitted, that "we should be conformed to the image of his son (q)." And "whoever are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, receive the sanctification of the spirit unto obedience (r)." It perhaps may not be an essential requisite to salvation, that a man believe the absolute irrelative decrees of God; nor am I sure that he will be damned tho' he utterly rejects them: but it is certainly necessary that he finds this decree of *Holiness* taking place, and *that* whereunto he is appointed, accomplishing. If any man be whol-

(p) Ephes. i. 4.

(q) Rom. viii. 29.

(r) 1 Peter i. 2.

ly destitute of this, and avowedly, habitually, allowedly the servant of iniquity; so long as he continues thus, GOD hath certainly decreed that his wrath abideth on him.

Secondly, It is among the chief ends of CHRIST's death, "to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (s.)" For "this purpose was the son of GOD manifested, "that he might destroy the works of the devil (t)." His chief work was sin. By this his dominion was upheld. JESUS, the name of our Deliverer, expresses his office: "He shall "save his people from their sins (u)." He doth it by dying: thus purchasing anew a property in us, and "redeeming us from the hands of our "enemies, that we might serve him without "fear, in holiness and righteousness before him "all the days of our life (x). When he gave himself for us," it was with this very view, "that he might sanctify and cleanse us (y)." And this he actually works in all *his* people: they are saints, holy brethren, conformed to their head, "a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices (z)." It is then as much as all

(s) Titus ii. 14.

(t) 1 John iii. 8.

(u) Matt. x. 21.

(x) Luke i. 75.

(y) Ephes. v. 26.

(z) 1 Peter ii. 5.

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our hopes are worth, that we see this great end of CHRIST's death answered in us. "He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure (a). If any man saith he hath fellowship with him, and walketh in darkness he is a liar, and the truth is not in him (b)." Let no man dream of any benefit from CHRIST's death in eternity, who doth not experience the quickning, sanctifying efficacy of it in time. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? GOD forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein (c)?" Every real believer is "crucified with CHRIST; is dead with him unto sin, that like as CHRIST was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, he also should walk in newness of life (d)." How blasphemously then do they speak who, whilst by their wickedness they are crucifying the son of God afresh, and putting him to open shame, plead his death as the prescription for their iniquities, and make the Holy One of GOD a Minister of sin?

Thirdly, The justification of a sinner by faith in JESUS CHRIST, necessarily binds and

(a) 1 John iii. 3.

(b) 1 John i. 6.

(c) Rom. vi. 2.

(d) Rom. vi. 4.

leads him to the practice of holiness. It is allowed that the hatred of sin, and the love of GOD, are the grand roots of all true holiness; whatever therefore most powerfully produces these, will most effectually secure the other. But this is peculiarly the property of faith. For when can sin ever appear to us so exceeding sinful, as when faith leads us to the accursed tree, and bids us "look upon him whom we have pierced (r)!" Where can God's displeasure against sin so affect our hearts, as when we see in the strong lines of the Redeemer's blood, what "an evil and bitter thing it is!" And where are we so bound, so compelled to lothe ourselves and sin, as when we eye his bloody sacrifice, and hear his groans, and see his mangled body, and look into the prints of the nails; and, as it were with *Thomas*, "thrust our hand into his side?" Must we not then "count ourselves dead indeed unto sin (s), and henceforth live unto God, servants of righteousness unto holiness (t)?" or where can God's love so mightily constrain us, as when faith represents him in the glorious character of a

(r) Zech. xii. 10. (s) Rom. vi. 11. (t) Rom. vi. 13.

pardoning

pardoning GOD in CHRIST? What can engage our hearts to him, if this doth not? What can bind us to walk before him, and please him, if not this "love for him who hath thus "so loved us (u)?" GOD then hath bound us to holiness by these strongest ties. He appoints faith as the means, and holiness as the fruit; he knew that true holiness could be no other way produced. The appointment therefore of the former, as the medium of conveying his salvation to us, is the proof of the necessity of the latter. And if this effect be not wrought, our faith is delusion.

Fourthly, All the means of grace imply the necessity of holiness, as this is their very use, that by them "we may grow up into him in "all things, who is our head, even CHRIST (x)."
Are we to "desire the sincere milk of the "word?" It is that "as new-born babes we "may grow thereby (y);" that we may be "sanctified through the truth (z)." Are we called upon to "pray without ceasing (a).?" It is in order to receive the supply of the spirit of holiness for our growth in grace, and ad-

(u) 1 John iv. 9. (x) Ephes. iv. 15. (y) 1 Peter ii. 2.

(z) John xvii. 7. (a) 1 Thess. v. 17.

vancement “ towards the measure of the stature
 “ of the fulness of CHRIST.” Are we ex-
 hortcd to christian fellowship? It is that we
 may “ watch over one another to provoke
 “ unto love and to good works (b).” This is
 the point ever aimed at, that we “ may in-
 “ crease with the increase of God (c), and be
 “ going on unto perfection (d).”

Fifthly, We are constantly in Scripture pressed
 to holiness, as the issue and due improvement
 of all its doctrines. Whoever reads but with
 a cursory eye the epistles, particularly of St.
Paul, will see how he not only intersperses
 occasional reflections in a way of moral in-
 ference, but always sums them up in a point,
 as a ground from whence to urge those practical
 duties which conclude all his writings. Hav-
 ing first established the great truth of redemp-
 tion through the blood of the Lamb, in its
 variety of connections and different respects
 with regard to God and us, this is his deduc-
 tion: “ Having therefore these promises, dear-
 “ ly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all
 “ filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting

(b) Heb. x. 24.

(c) Coloss. ii. 19.

(d) Heb. vi. 1.

“ holiness

“holiness in the fear of God (e).” Hence all the pressing exhortations that we should “walk worthy of our high vocation and calling (f) ; that we should adorn the doctrine of GOD our Saviour in all things (g) ; that “we should maintain those works which are “good and profitable unto men (h) ;” and especially in our stations and relative capacities behave ourselves “as persons professing godliness ;” with the most solemn injunctions on the faithful, that if any man who is a professor of the Gospel be disobedient, if any man defile the temple of GOD, if any man turn back to the love of the world, if any man walk dishonourably to his high vocation and calling ; they are “to note that man, to have “no company with him, that he may be “ashamed ; and if he persists impenitent and “incorrigible, then he is to be regarded as a “denier of the faith, and worse than the infidels (i)” around them. Let any man seriously read this, and say whether St. *Paul*, though eminently an affterer of salvation by

(e) 2 Cor. vii. 1.

(f) Ephes. iv. 1.

(g) Titus ii. 10.

(h) Titus. iii. 8.

(i) 2 Thess. iii. 14.

1 Tim. v. 8.

grace, was not as strenuous an advocate for holiness as the foremost of his colleagues.

Sixthly, That we should be holy, is the design of all the dispensations of God in his Providence. If he gives prosperity, it is that his goodness should engage our hearts to love and serve him. If he chastises, it is to purge and refine us. This is his view in the more general judgments he sends upon the nations of the world, "that the inhabitants thereof " may learn righteousness (*k*).¹ This is his purpose with regard to individuals. " He chast-
" neth us for our profit, that we may be par-
" takers of his holiness (*l*).² The dross of base affections is designed to be consumed in the furnace of affliction, and " the peaceable
" fruits of righteousness are actually brought
" forth by those who are duly exercised there-
" by (*m*).³ You see it is God's uniform design in all he doth, by his Providence as well as by his grace, that this great effect may be produced in his peculiar people, that is, their being " holy in all manner of conversation." And how are we then bound to correspond with him herein, and to improve our situation,

(*k*) *Isai.* xxvi. 9.(*l*) *Heb.* xii. 10.(*m*) *Heb.* xii. 11.

whatever it be, to the attainment of this gracious purpose and design of GOD ?

Seventhly, Holiness is of absolute necessity in order to admission into the presence of GOD. Except a man be "meet for the inheritance of "the Saints in light," he cannot partake in it. Glory and grace only differ in degree. We have "an earnest of our inheritance" in the blessed communications and consolations which the spirit ministers unto us. When heaven comes, the full harvest only comes of what on earth we had already the first-fruits. "The pure in heart shall see GOD (n) ;" whilst nothing can enter the sanctuary where his honour dwelleth, "which defileth or "worketh abomination (o)." It is a strange mistake with which "the god of this world "blinds the minds of those who believe not," that they may get "to heaven at last, though "they should be destitute of that newness of "heart, and life of faith, which the Scripture enjoins." But suppose it possible : What would an unrenewed soul do in heaven ? What happiness could he taste from the glory and service of that blessed place, whilst under

(n) Mat. v. 8.

(o) Rev. xxi. 27.

a total incapacity to relish the least measure of their joys? To be ever loving, admiring, praising the blessed God, to be following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, to be employed day and night without ceasing in his temple, to be in the nearest and tenderest communion of spirit with him, and with the adoring saints and angels, our brethren and companions; what happiness can you possibly have in these exercises, if *now* they are irksome, your aversion, and your burden? If *now* your conversation be *on earth*, not *in heaven*—if *now* you are living in servitude to the pleasures of sense, and not by faith—if *now* you are “serving” “foolish and hurtful lusts,” instead of “presenting your body, soul, and spirit, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto GOD (p)—” if *now* you are seeking happiness in the vanities of time, instead of looking forward to the glories of eternity—if *now* the company of God’s people and their employments you dislike and avoid—if *here* you are content to take up your abode, without having ever known a desire “to depart and to be with CHRIST is far better (q)” —if earthly, sen-

(p) Rom. xii. 1.

(q) Phil. i. 23.

sual, devilish tempers now reign in you, instead of the pure, peaceable, holy, heavenly, Christ-like dispositions of the child God—you may be assured there is no entrance for you in your present state into the presence of God; you have, you can have no idea of or relish for the happiness of the saints—you can receive no more pleasure from it, than the blind from the beauties of vision, or the deaf from the powers of harmony. But,

Eighthly, Without holiness you are not only incapable of seeing God and enjoying him, but you are actually and by express sentence excluded from it. “When the Son of man shall
“come, he shall send forth his holy angels, and
“gather out of his kingdom all things which
“offend, and which do iniquity, and shall
“cast them into a furnace of fire (r). No evil
“shall dwell with him (s).” A state of sin and exclusion from his presence are necessarily connected. “They who obey not his Gospel
“must be destroyed with the brightness of his
“coming (t). He that comitteth sin is of the
“devil (u).” By such habitual disobedience

(r) Matt. xiii. 42.

(s) Psal. v. 4.

(t) 2 Thess. ii. 8.

(u) 1 John iii. 8.

against

against GOD, he testifies what master he hath chosen to serve; and his wages will be as his work: "the wages of sin is death (x)." They who join with GOD's enemies will have their portion with them, in the "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels (y)." All pleas in the great day of the LORD will be fruitless, if the heart hath continued unrenewed the slave of corruption. To have cried, LORD, LORD, in his temple—to have heard the voice of CHRIST in our streets—yea, to have prophesied in his name, and done many wonderful works, will avail nothing, if in our temper and practice we have lived and died utter strangers to newness of life. He will say to every unholy soul in that day, "Depart from me, I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity (z)."

These are clear and convincing proofs of the absolute necessity of holiness here, as the way which leads to happiness hereafter; and should lead every man into the most serious inquiries into his state and temper. The "righteous scarcely are saved; and where

(x) Rom. vi. 23.

(y) Matt. xxv. 41.

(z) Luke xiii. 27.

" then

“then shall the ungodly and the sinner appear (a) ?”

I shall conclude with these observations.

1. If personal holiness be so absolutely necessary, “how few will be saved? Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (b).” It is often charged as a matter of great *uncharitableness*, to confess your faith in what GOD hath thus so solemnly declared. Every one hopes to be *saved* at last; and that, *at least*, those are safe who are not worse than themselves. But this is the blindness of the unholy, and the false “hope of the hypocrite which perisheth.” GOD’s word is the only standard. To this must each man’s state be referred. He requires love “out of a pure heart, and good conscience, and faith unfeigned (c).” And to this, it is evident, few can make any real pretensions. “The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of GOD. Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor

(a) 1 Pet. iv. 18.

(b) Matt. vii. 14.

(c) 1 Tim. i. 5.

“covetous,

“covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor
 “extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of
 “GOD (*d*).” Now were but these alone ex-
 cluded, (and excluded they must be, as sure
 as GOD is true) I fear the remainder who walk
 not in any of these things will be found but
 few. More especially if we add unto them,
 “all who walk in hatred, variance, emula-
 “tions, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envy-
 “ing, murders, revilings, and such like (*e*),”
 we shall still reduce the number less. But
 there are other express exclusions from GOD
 set upon “the fearful and unbelieving and
 “abominable, and all liars (*f*).” Nor are
 they less removed from him, “who are lovers
 “of their own selves, boasters, proud, blas-
 “phemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful,
 “unholy, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers
 “of pleasure more than lovers of GOD (*g*).”
 In short, “the profaners of GOD’s sabbath,
 “the dishonourers of his name, the neglecters
 “of his worship (*b*),” come under the same
 condemnation. Nor must we forget that nume-
 rous generation, “who are pure in their own

(d) 1 Cor. vi. 9.

(e) Gal. v. 20.

(f) Rev. xxi. 8.

(g) 2 Tim. iii. 4.

(b) Exod. xx. 7—10.

“eyes,

“eyes, yet are not washed from their filthiness (*i*); who have the form of godliness, “but deny the power of it (*k*).” I might add, lastly, the unfaithful to their convictions, those “who love the praise of men more than “the praise of God (*l*);” those “who put “their trust in man, and their heart departeth from the LORD (*m*);” the lukewarm, “neither hot nor cold (*n*),” that halt between GOD and *Baal*; and every man who hath not learned “to deny himself, to take up his cross “and follow CHRIST (*o*).” And will not the conclusion from these premises be, that “there are few which shall be saved (*p*)?” A remnant indeed, like that in the ark, or those plucked out of *Sodom*.

Let no man be offended at this truth, and attend to the infidel reasonings of his corrupt heart about unpromised mercy; but simply regard these express Scriptures. They are GOD’s word. “Heaven and earth shall pass “away, but one jot or one tittle of his word “shall never pass away until the whole be fulfilled (*q*).” There are no secret exceptions.

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|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (<i>i</i>) Prov. xxx. 12. | (<i>k</i>) 2 Tim. iii. 5. | (<i>l</i>) John xii. 43. |
| (<i>m</i>) Jer. xvii. 5. | (<i>n</i>) Rev. iii. 16. | (<i>o</i>) Matt. x. 38. |
| (<i>p</i>) Luke xiii. 23. | (<i>q</i>) Matt. xxiv. 35. | |

“GOD

"God cannot alter the thing which is gone
 "out of his mouth (r)." He must *deny himself*, if any soul, continuing to live and die
 in these things, be ever finally saved. But
 "God cannot lie (s). His truth abideth for
 "ever in heaven (t). Without holiness no
 "man shall see the LORD." What an awaken-
 ing admonition !

2. What reason then hath every man to look well
 to his heart ? "Be not deceived, God is not mock-
 "ed ; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he
 "also reap (u)." It is requisite that we "strive for
 "the mastery," that we "press towards the mark,"
 that we "be temperate in all things," that
 "we work out our salvation with fear and trem-
 "bling," that "we bring forth daily fruits meet
 "for repentance, and make our profiting appear,"
 if he would so run as to obtain. It is not a
 hasty resolution, a warm impression, a partial
 reformation, a round of duties, or a name of
 godliness, which will bring us to heaven.
 "God requireth truth in our inward parts (x) ;"
 he calls for our *heart* (y) ; and that chearful,
 abiding continuance in well-doing, which

(x) Psal. lxxxix. 34. (s) Titus. i. 2. (t) Psal. cxix. 89.

(u) Gal. vi. 7.

(x) Psal. li. 6.

(y) Prov. xxiii. 26.

shews "his service to be perfect freedom;" and obedience our choice and delight.

And here, if we are sincere with God, we shall have abundant cause to *humble* ourselves, in the view of our manifold infirmities—"to strengthen the things which remain,"—to examine our ways—to watch against "a deceitful and desperately wicked heart"—and to be looking up for continual supplies of grace, to stablish what God hath wrought, and to "perfect in us that which is lacking in us," until the LORD of our life "shall present us before the presence of his glory, with exceeding great joy, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, in perfect conformity to his own blessed image."

3. If we have experimentally tasted of the grace of God in truth, it becomes us to acknowledge, to the praise of his glory, to whom they are indebted for all—and to "walk by the same rule, and mind the same things (z). For we have not yet attained, or are already "perfect (a)."

Whilst we are on our pilgrimage, two things especially we need to abound in, humility and zeal.

(z) Phil. iii. 16.

(a) Phil. iii. 12.

First, Humility. "For what have we that we have not received? and if we have received it, why should we glory as though we had not received it (b)?" Whatever we are, "it is by the grace of GOD we are what we are (c). We are his workmanship." The whole is from him, by him, and must be ascribed to him. Besides, the old nature, the body of sin, that dwelleth in us, fighting still and troubling us, will afford us daily cause of abasement before GOD, and call upon us to say continually, even in our highest attainments, "I am nothing."

Second, Zeal. In a good cause we cannot be too zealously affected. We need not fear excess here. We cannot love GOD too much, or serve him beyond the claim his love hath upon us. An unbounded field is before us. "GOD's commandments are exceeding broad (d). Blessed are they who can truly say, O that I could keep them with my whole heart (e)!" Press then towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS: and every day that you advance towards the

(b) 1 Cor. iv. 7.

(d) Psal. cxix. 96.

(c) 1 Cor. xv. 10.

(e) Psal. cxix. 2.

kingdom,

kingdom, may you grow into a greater meetness for it; untill all your fervent effectual prayers are answered, until the wished-for "kingdom comes;" and perfect holiness and perfect happiness, in God and with God, become your everlasting portion!

S E R M O N XIV.

The Means of Holiness.

2 PETER i. 10.

Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

I HAVE been endeavouring to set before you the nature, and to convince you of the necessity of holiness. A task in these days the more needful, when by some persons vice is called virtue; when in others Satan is "transformed into an angel of light;" and when most people act as if indeed "heaven was open for all men," and "the gate no longer *strait* or the way *narrow*. Beware "that ye also be not led away by the error of
"the

“the wicked (*f*). Let the word of CHRIST
 “dwell in you richly (*g*).” Bring every asser-
 tion to be proved thereby; every doctrine to
 its test; every prescription for your conduct to
 its commands. “If any speak not according
 “to this rule, there is no light in them (*h*).”
 You will then find that one great end GOD
 proposes is, “that the man of GOD should
 “be perfect, thoroughly furnished for every
 “good work (*i*);” you will receive therefore
 the exhortation, and seriously attend to the
 practice of it, that “working out your own
 “salvation with fear and trembling (*k*), you
 “may give all diligence to make your calling
 “and election sure (*l*)” The means and the
 end are inseparably connected. Though “GOD
 “worketh in us to will and to do of his good
 “pleasure (*m*), and every good and every per-
 “fect gift cometh from above (*n*);” yet must
 we “be workers together with GOD.” He
 does not act upon us as machines, but as men
 engages and inclines us to *labour, strive, wrestle,*
press towards the mark. Though we have no
 power of ourselves to help ourselves, “his

(*f*) 2 Pet. iii. 17.(*g*) Coloss. iii. 16.(*h*) Isai. viii. 20.(*i*) 2 Tim. iii. 17.(*k*) Phil. ii. 12.(*l*) 2 Pet. i. 10.(*m*) Phil. ii. 13.(*n*) James i. 17.

“strength

“ strength is made perfect in our weakness.
 “ And it is the quickening cause of our diligence,
 “ that he giveth strength to the weak, and in
 “ those who have no might increaseth strength.”
 “ Be strong therefore in the LORD, and in the
 “ power of his might (o).” God hath himself
 pointed out the way wherein we should go, and
 promised his blessing in the diligent use of the
 appointed means. Our business therefore is to be
 found waiting upon GOD in his instituted way.
 And so doing we shall not fail to “ grow in grace,
 “ through the more abundant supply of the spi-
 “ rit of CHRIST ministred unto us (p).”

Whoever then would be growing up into him in
 all things, “ who is our head, even CHRIST (q),”
 must be found in the use of the means;
 namely, diligent attention to GOD’s word, me-
 ditation upon it, examination by it, prayer, mu-
 tual fellowship, and communion with CHRIST
 at his table.

First, A chief means of grace is the word of
 GOD heard or read. The promises are given to
 constrain us, the threatnings to over-awe us,
 the commands to direct, the prohibitions to re-
 strain us. But these effects cannot be produced

(o) Ephes. vi. 10.

(p) Phil. i. 19.

(q) Ephes. iv. 15.

if our hearts are inattentive to GOD's calls and warnings. Without a constant eye to the scriptures, we must err from the right way, and our conduct be guided by other maxims than the truth of GOD. And this is indeed the ground of all our sin and misery, that we have left the oracles of divine Revelation, to follow the devices of our corrupted hearts. "To the word therefore, and to the testimony. Search the scriptures (r)." This is the way to eternal life. And this should be done *diligently*. The matters they contain are infinitely important to us, and deserve our deepest attention. When you read the scriptures therefore, you must "seek for the truth as for silver, and search for it as for hid treasures (s)." Your eyes "should prevent the night-watches" to be occupied in this blessed word; that you may know GOD's will, and walk in the same. You should examine *thoroughly*. "For all scripture is given by inspiration of GOD." From Genesis to the Revelations we are to consider the precious truths, as all of them "profitable for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (t)." "And to compare spiritual things with spiritu-

(r) John v. 39.

(s) Prov. ii. 4.

(t) 2 Tim. iii 16.

“ al (u).” And this *daily*. The word of God must be your continual study. “ O how I love
“ thy law, all the day long is my study in it (x).”
For this the *Bereans* were so highly commended,
that “ they searched the scriptures daily (y).”
Indeed what is so proper, what so needful for
us as this, that we should begin our days with
inquiring at God’s mouth, and conclude them
with his counsel? For “ when thou sleepest it
“ shall keep thee, and when thou awakest it shall
“ talk with thee (z).” Add also, *seriously*. The
matter is weighty; eternity depends upon it.
The scripture is God’s voice. Let the heart
stand in awe of him. Mr. *Boyle* had so great a
reverence for God’s word, that he used to read
it upon his knees. And we should also feel a
temper as deeply serious as that posture implied—
and withal *humbly*. “ Speak, LORD, for thy
“ servant heareth,” must be our language,
Not cavilling, but obeying; not curious, but
submissive; then shall we find the power of God
present in his word, and the effects of it upon
our hearts will be weighty and influential. We
shall daily be cast into its mold; and God’s

(u) 1 Cor. ii. 13.

(x) Psal. cxix. 97.

(y) Acts xvii. 11.

(z) Prov. vi. 21.

holy word, mixed with faith, will produce the fruits of righteousness, which are by JESUS CHRIST to the glory and praise of GOD.

Secondly, Let your meditations thereon be sweet and frequent, if you would grow thereby. It is having the truth rooted in our hearts, (as the seed covered up fixes in the ground) that makes it bring forth fruit unto eternal life. Many hearers of the word, "like men beholding
"their natural face in the glass, go away straight
"and forget what manner of persons they
"were (a)." But we are charged "to keep these
"words in our hearts, to talk of them when
"we sit in our house, and when we walk by the
"way, and when we lie down, and when we
"rise up (b)." It is thus by "setting GOD in
"his word always before us, that we shall not
"be moved." For want of this the devil so often cometh and taketh the word, "like the
"seed which fell by the way side (c), out of
"our hearts." Treasure up, therefore, the truths which you read and hear. Go forth with them for your meditation through the day. See whether you can say with the Prophet. "Thy
"words were found by me, and I did eat them ;

(a) James i. 24.

(b) Deut. vi. 7.

(c) Mat. xiii. 4.

"and

“and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart (*d*).” What digestion is to our food, that is meditation to the scripture, making it incorporate into our substance, and minister nourishment, strength and consolation to us.

Thirdly, Call your heart often to deep and serious examination by it. “Prove your own-selves, know your ownelves (*e*),” is the apostolic injunction, and most highly necessary if you would “increase with the increase of GOD.” Our corrupt and deceitful hearts have need of the most jealous eye over them, lest they turn aside from the right way. We thus discover the beginnings of sin, and detect the insinuations of error; and “searching and trying our ways re-
“turn unto the LORD (*f*).” Hereby we discover where our hearts are weakest, that we may put an especial guard on that side—what graces we are more especially called to exercise—what are the dangers of our place, temper and stations—what “the sins that most easily beset us”—and what requests we have particularly to make unto him, “out of whose fulness we
“may receive grace for grace.”

(*d*) Jer. xv. 16. (*e*) 2 Cor. xiii. 5. (*f*) Lam. iii. 40.

At any time of retirement this exercise is proper, and especially suitable at even, when we review the transactions of the day past. We should blame the merchant or considerable tradesman, whose negligence deferred to keep account daily of his profit and loss: nor could we think, without frequent inspection into the state of his affairs, his business likely to flourish. No more can our souls grow in grace without the like diligence in our spiritual concerns; which, as they are of so much greater moment to us, deserve so much greater inspection and inquiry into them. I cannot wonder that many professors so decline, "that grey hairs are upon them and they know it not (g)." when they are so negligent about this matter—So superficial in their inquiries about their progress—and so easily satisfied with themselves, though their profiting appeareth not. Yea, when most they need to look into themselves for humiliation and conviction, that they may be led to JESUS CHRIST the sinner's surety, like men in debt, they decline the search, as if afraid to know the reality of their state. It is a bad sign when we want not to go to the bottom of our hearts, to know the very truth of our

(g) Hosea vii. 9.

case,

case, that we may present it before the LORD. Like the spreading gangrene, such declensions threaten apostasy. "*Principus obsta*;" Resist the beginnings: is a maxim as applicable to our souls as to our bodies. Mark this, They will be most alive to GOD, and walk nearest with him, who bring their hearts to closest examination in the word, and most carefully remark every deviation from it.

Fourthly, Prayer is an especial means of growing in grace, I may call it indeed the chief. It is, as it were, the key of heaven which unlocks the treasures of grace. All holiness is derived from the spirit of GOD. This spirit is promised "to those that ask (*b*)."
Our fruit unto holiness springing from the grace bestowed upon us, the more diligently we ask, the more abundantly, according to the promise, shall we receive.

Prayer is the desire of the heart after GOD. It arises from a sense of want, acts in dependence on the promise, and expects an answer according to our necessities. "They who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled (*i*)."
Newness of heart and life

(*b*) Luke xi. 13.

(*i*) Matt. v 6.

is the prayer of faith carried into practice. As we are diligent in the one, we shall find correspondent effects in the other. The soul that goes continually to the throne of grace, and lives through the day in the spirit of prayer and supplication, cannot but feel a determination of heart against sin: a desire "to perfect holiness in the fear of God," and such a sense of the divine presence as is at once restraining and transforming.

Whoever hath read the histories of the holiest men will find them characterised, as peculiarly men of prayer. Whilst on the other hand, no sooner doth any person begin to turn back, than his first declensions are usually most visible in his *closet*: then, the dominion of sin returning, prayer is totally laid aside. For if prayer does not make us leave sin, sin allowed and indulged will soon make us leave prayer. At least if the form be observed, all the power of prayer will be gone. The lips and not the heart will be found speaking before God.

Our blessed LORD himself, as man, thus obtained the power of submitting wholly to his Father's will. He "was heard, when
"with strong crying and tears he made sup-
"plica-

“plications (k).” And if He was thus made perfect and obtained grace, how much more have we need to redouble our requests, and seek herein especially to copy his example?

Prayer is of various kinds, *public, social, and private*. Hence we are exhorted to “pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watch thereunto with all perseverance (l).” *Public* worship is a most blessed exercise, and most influential on the practice of holiness. We shall feel our hearts quickened to every good word and work, towards those with whom they have united our requests in these solemn exercises. “Where two or three have consented together to ask any thing,” God hath assured us, he will give it (m). And how much more may we be confident, that our mutual supplications and intercessions shall find an answer of peace, when in the great congregation, with one mind and one mouth, we consent to pour out our desires before the throne of grace? *Family* worship is also greatly influential. As the Prophet, directed by the Spirit, calls upon God “to pour out his fury upon the families

(k) Heb. v. 7. (l) Ephes. vi. 18. (m) Matt. xviii. 19.

“ which call not on his name (n) ;” so we may be assured that God’s peculiar blessing will rest upon the houses where his honour dwelleth. What can be imagined so effectual to restrain ourselves and all under our roof from offending ? What so powerful to quicken our concern about pleasing and serving the LORD, as the sense of his nearness to us, and our dependence upon him ? And what will so naturally tend to beget this, as a constant, open joint-acknowledgment of his goodness, and supplication for his grace ? What can lay upon ourselves more striking obligations to go in and out before our households, examples of faith and godliness, than the remembrance of our prayers with them and for them ? And what so likely to be influential on *their* hearts, as joining with us in supplications — hearing their case importunately spread before God — and the solemn purpose renewed, “ that we
 “ and our house will serve the LORD (o) ?” Let the masters of prayerless families tremble. Ungodliness must be in their dwellings. Their childrens, their servants blood, as well as their own, is upon their heads. But especially must

(n) Jer. x. 25.

(o) Joshua xxiv. 15.

private prayer be exercised. We “ must speak “ to our Father which is in *secret* (p);” must speak to him with the confidence and humble freedom of children; telling him the very secrets of our souls, humbling our hearts for our very thoughts before him, and beseeching him, that knoweth what we need, to supply abundantly our wants in JESUS CHRIST. And this should be done with that importunity and perseverance which our LORD recommends in the parable of the unjust judge, and enjoins, when he bids us “ always pray and not “ faint (q).”

How often we should be in *secret* prayer, it is impossible to determine. Every man’s circumstances must be considered, and the peculiar situation he is in. *David* prayed “ seven “ times a day;” (r) *Daniel* thrice (s). But at least morning and evening are naturally suggested unto us as the most proper seasons, that we may begin and end the day with God. Whilst throughout the day, whoever are panting after nearness to and communion with God, will send forth many an ardent desire

(p) Matt. vi. 6.

(r) Psal. cxix. 164.

(q) Luke xviii. 1.

(s) Dan. vi. 10.

from their hearts in the intervals of leisure ; and oftentimes in the midst of business, company or labour, a warm ejaculation will dart upwards, that in silence pierces the clouds, and “ ascends as incense before the throne out “ of the Angel’s hand.” In this way we may be assured we shall grow in grace. And when we have endured a little while, our prayers shall be changed into everlasting praises.

Fifthly, To prayer I add *mutual converse*, as very helpful to the gracious soul. As we are travelling the same road, the experience of others will be the more useful to us. We have the same enemies, the same cause, the same corruptions, the same path of obedience to tread, and the same hope of glory in view. To secure this it is our wisdom to consult together ; “ in the multitude of counsellors “ there is safety (1).” We shall need therefore speak often one to another ; whether to encourage the feeble-minded—warn the unruly—admonish the rash—recover the erroneous—raise up the fallen—or counsel the distressed—and shall find the greatest profit by “ confessing our faults one to another, as

(1) Prov. xi. 14.

“well as by praying for each other (u).” In all other things frequent conversation is thought most useful to accomplish any species of instructions, and why not here also? Indeed we shall know little of the way to heaven, nor shall we walk in it, if we satisfy ourselves, as the many do, with hearing, it may be, a sermon on a *Sunday*. We must have these great truths in our mouths on other days, delight to speak of our eternal concerns, and count the blessing of the *communion of saints*, in all the branches of it, among our chief enjoyments upon earth. It is almost impossible for any minister to take the full and particular care of each individual of his flock: his work is rather “to preach the word.” It is every man’s business “to exhort his brother daily (x).” And wherever there is any spiritual life among us, there will necessarily arise a desire to converse together about the things of God; to “watch over one another with a godly jealousy (z);” to open our hearts freely; to speak our suspicions: to rebuke with freedom and tenderness, and to “build up each other “in our most holy faith.” The practice of

(u) James v. 16.

(x) Heb. iii. 13.

(z) 2 Cor. xi. 2.

true holiness is never so conspicuous as where this genuine simplicity of heart, and enlarged charity to the brethren, shew themselves by free and heart-searching conversation together. Self-deceit is then more detected, our principles more nearly examined into, mistakes discovered, backslidings reprov'd, and if a man sin, he is "restored in the spirit of meekness." If I was to ascribe the luke-warm and unornamental walk of those who make a profession of religion to any *one* cause, perhaps it is as much owing to this as any, that they want the true simplicity of heart which would lead them to more experimental conversation; instead of that trifling, general, unedifying discourse which usually prevails amongst them: a religious kind of gossiping, and justly censured by those who are *without*, as a prying into others faults, instead of discovering and amending their own.

Sixthly, I would conclude with recommending a serious and devout attendance at the LORD's table. Nothing can have a more direct tendency to quicken us in the good ways of the LORD, than that ordinance in which our adored SAVIOUR makes all his love to pass before us. What can kindle in our hearts
such

such a flame of love, so greatly confirm our faith, enliven our zeal, increase our hatred of sin, or urge us to copy his example, as when we are remembering the LORD's death, when we are commemorating his blood-shedding for us, reflect upon the evil of sin, and see that holy Lamb of GOD leading the way before us in the path of righteousness? Hither therefore should we often repair, to renew our solemn surrender of ourselves to him, and to receive the pledges of his everlasting love to us; whenever we have opportunity with delight approaching his table, and eating and drinking his body and blood, with true discernment, to the strengthening and refreshing our souls. This will continually serve to bind our hearts in bonds of nearer union to our holy head, and oblige us to walk worthy our high vocation and calling "in all holy conversation and godliness; adorning the doctrine of GOD our SAVIOUR;" and convincing the world, that the religion of JESUS hath a power and efficacy to transform the soul: not merely to distinguish us from others by a christian name, but by a divine nature: so that we become "one with CHRIST and CHRIST with us."

Happy

Happy are they who in these things seek daily to abide and abound. They cannot fail of success, growing in grace and in the knowledge of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. Thus "exercising ourselves unto godliness," we shall be strengthened daily with might in the inner man; until all our enemies being put under our feet, our warfare will be finally ended, and we shall go where there is no more corruption, no more sin, no more enemies, no more danger, no more need of wrestling, watching, praying, labouring; but that which is perfect being come, our work will be accomplished, and an eternity of happiness succeed. We shall then *see* God; shall be *with him*, and be *like him*, and "enter into that rest," which no tongue can describe nor heart conceive, nobly called in our Liturgy, "our final consummation in bliss, both in body and soul, in his eternal glory."

I have only to add my ardent prayers and wishes, that every one of you may be using these means, that you may come to this happy end. And if but one soul only be influenced thereby, I shall think all my pains amply repaid, when I shall meet you in the great day of our redeemer, and this labour of love
among

among others be laid at his feet to your joy as well as my own. May his Spirit bless what hath been spoken according to his mind and word, and to HIM shall all the praise and glory be ascribed for ever and ever !

S E R M O N XV.

The Blessedness of the Righteous.

PROVERBS xii. 28.

In the way of righteousness is life, and in the pathway thereof there is no death.

IT is a common and dangerous prejudice which is entertained against the ways of true religion, that they are dull, forbidding and melancholy : and hence young people especially are discouraged by the gloomy prospect ; and regard a life of godliness as obliging them to part with every present enjoyment for austerities and mortifications, little less than a cell and sackcloth. And perhaps the mistakes of some professors of religion have not a little contributed to confirm these prejudices : who, whilst they have substituted

tuted moroseness for gravity, and reckoned a downcast look and darkened brow the proper index of a serious mind, have put fresh stumbling-blocks in the way of those who judge chiefly by appearances. But there is no real cause for this in the nature of the religion of JESUS. Just the contrary. As none enjoy so much inward peace and serenity, none can have so much cause for cheerfulness as they who, "walking humbly with GOD (a), seek in the "first place his kingdom and righteousness (b)." The sons of GOD, like *Isaac*, are truly "sons "of laughter;" not the boisterous mirth of fools, or the intemperate sallies of wantonness, but an habitual composure and delightful calm are the privileges of the souls of those who have an interest in everlasting promises, and "are the sons and daughters of the LORD "Almighty (c)." It is the interest indeed of the grand enemy of mankind to misrepresent the paths of duty; to frighten us from pursuing them by lying suggestions; and, like the spies who went up to view the promised *Canaan*, to "bring an evil report on the good land (d):" thus he discourages the hearts of those who are

(a) Micah vi. 8.

(b) Matt. vi. 33.

(c) 2 Cor. vi. 18.

(d) Numb. xiii. 32.

willing

willing to enter. But "let no man's heart fail (e) : " can it be imagined that GOD ever intended religion should lessen our happiness below ? And that he should leave to a " world lying in wickedness," enjoyments greater than his own children possess ? " That " be far from him." He hath provided for them upon earth the chief portion, and intends the comforts of his love in this life shall be the foretastes of their eternal blessedness in a better. For " in the way of righteousness," and in this alone, " is life," the truly happy life ; and " in the path-way thereof," to all who abide in it, " there is no death ; " but glory, honour and immortality await them in the mansions of bliss above.

To enter more explicitly into the proof of this, I would observe, that happiness is to be obtained either from the gratifications of sense, and the enjoyments of the world, or from the denial of these in a life of faith and holiness : which two are contrary the one to the other ; and as far as the soul is engaged in the pursuit of the one, it will despise or disrelish the other. Now if it can be proved that the world and

(e) 1 Sam. xvii. 32.

the things of it cannot afford us the happiness we want, and that the service of the LORD, the consciousness of his favour, and experience of his love, can make us always rejoicing; then surely we shall act as foolishly as sinfully, to seek "from broken cisterns, which "can hold no water (*f*)," those draughts of happiness, which the living waters that flow from the rock CHRIST can only minister to the soul.

The world promises happiness from three great sources; *pleasure*, *riches*, and *honour*. But neither of these fulfil their promises to us either in life or death. The "god of this "world, who was a liar from the beginning (*g*)," doth ever prove so to those who, deceived by his offers, pursue as their happiness "the "things which are seen and temporal, instead "of the things which are not seen and are "eternal (*h*)."

I. The world promises us happiness from the enjoyment of *pleasure*. Decked in the attire of fashion, this smiling *Delilah* "sitteth "in the high places of the city;" and with inviting tongue deludes the young and thoughtless into her snare, with assurances of every

(*f*) Jer. ii. 13.(*g*) John viii. 44.(*h*) 2 Cor. iv. 18.

bliss.

bliss. "I have perfumed my bed with myrrh
"and cinnamon; come, let us take our fill of
"love until the morning, let us solace ourselves
"with loves (*i*)."
But how are these promises fulfilled? Scripture and experience will quickly determine.

Who of all men under the sun ever more diligently sought happiness from indulgence than *Solomon*? or who had such opportunities of boundless gratification? A King, absolute in his government, possessing riches immense, blest with the most refined taste, and endued with the tenderest sensibility: see him eager in the pursuit, and determined to spare no pains or cost to taste the sweetest draughts of that *Circæan* cup. "I said in my heart, Go to now
"I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy
"pleasure (*k*)."
Straight pleasure and mirth rang through his palaces! Luxury crowned the board, wine sparkled in the flowing bowl, harmony charmed the ear, and passion rioted in the arms of beauty: thus for a while the Court of *Comus* was in *Zion*. "I withheld not," says *Solomon*, "my heart from any joy (*l*)."
But after trial did it recommend the experiment?

(*i*) Prov. vii. 18.

(*k*) Eccl. ii. 1.

(*l*) Eccl. ii. 10.

No ;

No; "Behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doth it (*m*)?" These poor unsatisfying delights intirely disappointed his appetite; an immortal soul could taste no real joy, from the gratifications of a beast, however refined.

And saith not every day's experience the same? Look into your own heart, and say, Have you found the portion the pleasures of sense promised you? Have you not ever been disappointed in their possession, and grasped a shadow where you thought to embrace a substance? Your heart hath beat high in the prospect of some delightful scene; but when it came, it palled upon the taste, was rather tiresome than pleasing, and disgusted more than it delighted you. And in an hour of retirement, when reflection returned, and the delusions of imagination gave way to the just remonstrances of conscience; how sensibly and painfully have you felt, that you chased a phantom of happiness, which proved to be real "vanity and vexation of spirit?" You beat the dull round of pleasure, not so much for any real joy you tasted in it, as because you knew not how otherwise

(*m*) Eccles. ii. 2.

to employ yourself; and took refuge in this course of studied forgetfulness, to avoid the disagreeable task of looking inward, and to silence the secret discontent of an unsatisfied mind. The absence of God, the foundation of all consolation, hath left a void which nothing but himself can fill.

This is all the happiness of the young, the gay, and the admired; yea, too often (shamefull to tell) of those also, whose desire of pleasure hath out-lived their power of enjoyment; and wrinkles and grey hairs proclaim their folly as great as their sin. And is it for this that religion is neglected, and all the pleasures of CHRIST's delightful service scorned and rejected!

But there are delights to be found in the ways of CHRIST which a pleasure-loving world "knoweth not of." Whatever here below the Saviour bestows upon them richly to enjoy, they receive as his gifts; their earthly comforts are sweetned, and their lawful pleasures doubly enjoyed under a sense of his love. But this is not their chief portion. They possess "a joy, which the stranger to his grace intermeddleth not with," and which the world cannot receive; delights suited to the state
of

of an immortal soul; pleasure arising from the sense of the favour and love of the ever-blessed God; pleasure which immediately flows from the service we are engaged in, and accompanies the soul in every reflection upon it; pleasure that rising within in the heart, bursts forth in streams of peace and joy, and continues increasing to eternity, “as a well of water “springing up into everlasting life (n).” The earthly vanities the world pursues, estrange the heart still farther from God. These carnal delights debase the soul, and forge new chains to keep the soul under the bondage of corruption: “for his servants we are to whom we “obey.” And how can there be pleasure in slavery, or happiness in chains? But do we return to CHRIST as our portion, tired with the fruitless pursuits of the past, mourning over so much time abused, so many talents squandered, so much forgetfulness of God; then we begin to enter into rest. CHRIST shews us in his blood the purchase he hath made of present happiness and future glory: and invites us to come to “fountains of living waters, “instead of the broken cisterns” at which

(n) John vi. 14.

we have toiled so long in vain to draw. “Be-
 “ing justified by Faith, we have peace with
 “God (o).” And these are among the first-
 fruits of the Spirit, which they who believe in
 him do receive, “peace and joy (p).” It is
 true, to a soul devoted to dissipation these, like
 objects seen by a jaundiced eye, are misrep-
 resented. The way to them through the valley of
 humiliation looks forbidding; and a life of self-
 denial “and mortification of our members upon
 “earth,” the effect of CHRIST’s love, seems to
 promise nothing but wretchedness. But they
 who make the trial find the difference, and are
 ready to set their seal to GOD’s truth; and to
 declare that they have not been, as before, dis-
 appointed of their hopes. Each step taken in
 CHRIST’s ways brings pleasantness and peace.
 The very mournings of the soul returning to its
 rest in him are delightful; and none know the
 joy of the tears of penitence but those who drop
 them. Rough as the way appears, it is but as
 the gloomy avenue (not in itself destitute of plea-
 sure) which opens to some delightful prospect:
 and these sweet sorrows are quickly followed by
 “peace and joy in believing (q).” Nor for a

(s) Rom. v. 1.

(f) Gal. v. 22.

(q) Rom. xv. 13.

time only, but all life through the prospect brightens, the pleasure is heightened. The intercourse of the believing soul with God in secret meditation; the communion maintained with him in acts of prayer, and silent aspirations to him; the growing conformity of our hearts to his image, who is "glorious in holiness;" the different joy that Christian fellowship brings from any of the friendships of this world; together with the reviving hope of, and eager looking for, "that glory which shall be revealed in us (r)," when from drinking of the streams below we shall go to drink of the fountain-head above; *these* are sources of solid, substantial, rational pleasures, as much superior to the poor joys of sense, as the mild sunshine and genial warmth of a long and temperate summer exceed the suddenly expiring and crackling "blaze of thorns."

II. The world proposes happiness to others in affluence. Money is counted "the one thing needful:" Money is supposed to bring all the other blessings of this life along with it. Under this persuasion, like the horse-leach's two daughters, the worldling cries incessantly, "Give, give (s); joining house to house, and field to

(r) Rom. viii. 18.

(s) Prov. xxx. 15.

"field (t);"

“ field (t) ;” and herein seeks his felicity. But of riches it may be safely affirmed, happiness is not in them. The world cannot give it; abundance often removes us farther from it, and will not permit us to know rest or peace. On principles of reason it should seem evident, that all the treasures upon earth can never satisfy a soul that is immortal; and the scripture stamps folly on the pursuit of them. “ A man’s life (meaning the comfort of it) “ consisteth not in the “ abundance of the things he possesseth (u).” St. Paul, describing those who substitute gain for godliness, informs us, that “ they who will be “ rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and “ into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which “ drown men in perdition and destruction (x).” And our blessed LORD hath left us this awful declaration, “ How hardly shall they that have “ riches enter into the kingdom of GOD ! It is “ easier for a camel to go through the eye of a “ needle, than for a rich man to enter into the “ kingdom of GOD (y).” Surely then such acquisitions are little suited to administer the joy they promise. And whose experience doth not

(t) Isai. v. 8.

(u) Luke xii. 15.

(x) 1 Tim. vi. 9.

(y) Matt. xix. 24.

witness it? We foolishly call the rich *happy*. But could we see their anxious care—their inward restlessness—the misery of desires delayed or disappointed, for a share of misery falls to the lot of the most fortunate—could we know their constant fears of losing—their thirst for more, which suffers them not to enjoy their present possessions—the consciousness that something is still wanting which riches cannot purchase here below—and the certainty that they profit not in the day of wrath—could we follow one “making
 “haste to be rich,” through all his toils and labours, his weary days and sleepless nights, and all his various vexations; we should be fully convinced of the truth of *this*, that he who increaseth riches increaseth sorrow. I may appeal to every man’s heart who hath sought happiness from this quarter, if this hath not been his case. You promised yourself you should by and by be happy, when the other thousand was added to your stock, or the next purchase enlarged your estate: you had your wish, and yet you still wanted; something was lacking. You proposed new additions, and waited for your happiness again. But a new thirst urged you again to new toils: and if the time should ever come that you shall think you have enough, and, like
 the

the rich man in the Gospel, “begin to pull
“down your barns and build greater; and are
“ready to say to your soul, Soul, thou hast
“much goods laid up for many years; take
“thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry (z):”
then expect the final disappointment, in that
alarming message, “Thou fool, this night thy
“soul shall be required of thee (a).”

Such is all the happiness of those who love this
present world, and “trust in uncertain riches
“more than in the living God (b).”

But hath not CHRIST something more *satisfy-*
ing to bestow; something more *durable* to give to
those who seek their happiness in him? Yes, ve-
rily. “I counsel thee, says he, to buy of me
“fine gold, that thou mayest be rich (c).”
CHRIST is a portion, adequate to the boundless
desires of the soul; and “the unsearchable
“riches of his Grace” make the possessor at
once affluent and happy. What are beds of
sapphires, or rocks of diamonds, compared with
that blood which cleanseth from all sin; the
pardon of the least of which the universe cannot
purchase? Is not the gift of Faith “more pre-

(z) Luke xii. 18.

(a) Luke xii. 20.

(b) 1 Tim. vi. 17.

(c) Rev. iii. 18.

“cious than gold which is tried in the fire (*d*)?” and every divine temper better than “clothing of wrought gold?” These are present possessions, more substantial goods than the treasures of both the *Indies*. But “our abiding city is not here below:” this is not our inheritance, our home. We look for “an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, which fadeth not away (*e*).” Treasures laid up for us in a kingdom, where “moth doth not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal (*f*).” A mansion prepared for us in the city of our GOD; a city, whose streets are gold, whose gates are pearl, and whose foundations are precious stones (*g*).” The moment therefore we begin to find our ALL in CHRIST, tormenting care and restless anxiety no longer disturb our repose: we “rise up in peace, for the LORD sustaineth us;” we lie down without a fear of losing what we have laid up with him, “who is able to keep that good thing we have committed to him against that day (*h*).” Thus we can always say with the blessed Apostle, “I possess all things, and abound (*i*).” We have learnt the great les-

(*d*) 1 Pet. i. 7. (*e*) 1 Pet. i. 4. (*f*) Matt. vi. 20.

(*g*) Rev. xxi. 10—19. (*h*) 2 Tim. i. 12. (*i*) Phil. iv. 18.

son,

son, "in whatsoever state we are, therewith to
"to be content (*k*); and find that godliness with
"contentment is great gain (*l*)."

Let any man compare this condition of a believer walking in the way of righteousness with the worldling; and say, which hath chosen the *better part*. And this is not an ideal character; it is, blessed be GOD! the experience of thousands, who every day "go on their way rejoicing;" and of many too, who, under the severest pressures of poverty and want, find in JESUS CHRIST that *hid treasure* (*m*) they would not exchange for "thousands of gold and silver. For GOD hath
"chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith,
"and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to those that love him (*n*)."
It is true, the present comfort which the riches of CHRIST administer above the vain fashion of a world which "perisheth in the using," may hardly be made evident to the worldly-minded, "the god of this world having blinded "their eyes (*o*);" yet is it experimentally known by those who possess it; and rejoiced in, as the most enduring substance, the most satisfying reality.

(*k*) Phil. iv. 11.

(*l*) 1 Tim. vi. 6.

(*m*) Matt. xiii. 44.

(*n*) James ii. 5.

(*o*) 2 Cor. iv. 4.

III. The world seeks to ensnare men's souls, and promises them happiness in the possession of *honour*. And indeed, to be distinguished in the world, treated with respect, spoken of with admiration, caressed by superiors, and imitated and admired by equals as a pattern; *these* are things exceeding pleasing to the heart of a natural man, and engage many far above the vanities of pleasure or the sordidness of gain. Yet doth the inordinate desire of worldly esteem remove the soul as much from true happiness as either of the former. The enjoyment arising from the honour which cometh from man, stands continually on a precarious foundation; it totters before every blast of disrespect, and every rumour of malevolence. Even here below, "like grass on the house-top, it often withereth before it is plucked up." For what can stand before envy? The hopes of men, like bubbles in the air, usually burst as they expand. The labours of Ambition are disappointed, the pride of Honour mortified, the idol of Reputation broken to pieces, and the friendships of the world generally faithless. Would a man who had made this his road to happiness but reflect, he would be obliged to confess, that he had been torturing himself to

conform

conform to the humours and fashions of others—seeking by his compliances a phantom of reputation light as a shadow—grasping after a distinction vain and insignificant, even where obtained—making his happiness depend on the beck or breath of a worm like himself—and storing up for himself many sorrows, either in the present chagrin and disappointment, to which he must be often exposed—or (if he should be happily brought to a sense of his folly and sin) in forfeiting that very esteem, and getting rid of those connections, which were before the business and desire of his life. Indeed it is not in man to create a happiness from himself; it is not in man to communicate it to others. Nay, it were absurd to suppose, that God would suffer *any* of his creatures to enjoy a happiness independent of himself; and more so, that *sinful men*, whom misery follows as their shadow, should be able thus to make each other happy.

But what shall we say when we consider farther, what God hath declared of such lovers of human honour: “Curfed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm (c).” The friendship of the world is “enmity with

(c) Jer. xvii. 5.

“ GOD. Whosoever will be the friend of the
 “ world is the enemy of God (*p*). How can
 “ you believe who seek honour one of another
 “ (*q*)? If I yet pleased men, I should not be
 “ the servant of CHRIST (*r*).” Go then, and
 with these express declarations of GOD against
 you, dare to be happy. O wretched happiness
 of the world, that hath the curse of GOD resting
 upon it for ever!

But in the way of righteousness is true happiness arising from true honour, “ the honour
 “ which cometh from GOD only.” An honour that depends not on the breath of man to give or take away. An honour the highest any mortal is capable of conceiving or enjoying.
 “ Behold, says St. *John*, what manner of love
 “ the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we
 “ should be called THE SONS OF GOD (*s*).”
 What *dignity* like this, to be “ the heirs of
 “ GOD and joint-heirs with CHRIST (*t*)?”
 The highest pinnacle of human glory is infinitely more beneath it, than the earth is distant from the remotest star. What *connections* can be so great and honourable as “ fellowship

(*p*) James iv. 4. (*q*) John v. 44. (*r*) Gal. i. 10.

(*s*) 1 John iii. 1. () Rom. viii. 17.

“ with

“ with the Father and with his Son JESUS
 “ CHRIST (*u*)?” No favour here will be de-
 nied us. “ Ask, and ye shall receive (*x*).”
 For he “ hath never said to any of the seed
 “ of *Jacob*, Seek ye my face in vain (*y*).”
 What *honour* can be equal to *that* which the
 GOD of glory bestows on his favourite chil-
 dren? “ Those that honour me I will ho-
 “ nour (*z*).” Or what *regard* so desirable as
 his? “ If a man keep my commandments,
 “ my Father and I will love him, and come
 “ unto him, and make our abode with him (*a*).”
 And their “ favour is better than the life it-
 “ self (*b*).” A favour, more enduring than
 the foundations of the earth; not like the
 precarious esteem of man, but arising from
 the everlasting love and faithfulness of GOD.
 A favour, which secures our happiness when
 all below threatens to destroy it. A favour,
 that makes the possessor of it superior to all
 human disgrace, unmoved at reproach, satis-
 fied under oppression, and welcoming the cross
 of CHRIST with all its ignominy. A due
 sense of the nature of this favour it was which

(*u*) 1 John i. 3. (*x*) John xvi. 24. (*y*) Isai. xlv. 19.
 (*z*) 1 Sam. ii. 30. (*a*) John xiv. 23. (*b*) Psal. lxxiii. 3.

engaged *Moses* to “count the reproach of
 “CHRIST greater riches than the treasures of
 “*Egypt* (c); greater honour than to be called
 “the son of *Pharaoh’s* daughter (d).” This
 made the disciples of JESUS come from stripes
 and imprisonment, “rejoicing that they were
 “counted worthy to suffer shame for his name
 “fake (e).” Now surely these must be paths
 of true happiness, that can thus make the
 believer to cease from man, to rejoice in tri-
 bulation, to enjoy himself independent of the
 world; honoured of GOD when most despised
 of man, and peaceful and easy, even when
 “cast out as the filth and off-scouring of all
 “things.”

Thus here *below*, the believer who makes
 CHRIST his portion—his word his guide—his
 will his pleasure—his grace his riches—his ho-
 nour his ambition—his service his delight—
 “holds on his way, and waxes stronger and
 “stronger;” enjoying the present sense of the
 divine favour, and happy in the assured hope
 of the “glory, honour and immortality pre-
 “pared for him in heaven (f).”

(c) Heb. xi. 26.

(d) Heb. xi. 24.

(e) Acts v. 41.

(f) Rom. ii. 7.

This happiness of the way of righteousness is yet more convincingly felt, when death comes to put a final period to this mortal scene. The awful hour, that strips off the tinsel coverings of folly, stamps vanity on all things beneath the sun, and shews the insignificance of time, and the importance of eternity, displays peculiarly the delights of the religion of JESUS. What can the world in that day offer its foolish votaries? Will a party of pleasure suit the chamber of disease? or the songs of folly any more delight the ear that listens restless with impatience to the striking hour? What music will harmonize with dying groans? Or what enjoyment can the brilliant or brocade afford, when the shroud is ready to supplant them! Will the sparkling bowl revive any longer when the parched tongue begins to falter? or beauty *kindle the unhallowed fire*, when death sits on the eye-lids, and chilling coldness begins to creep through the veins? Alas! too late! "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity (g)," is now seen in characters too legible to be overlooked. The retrospect on a life spent in a round of pleasure; in plays, and operas, and

(g) Ecclef. i. 2.

drums, and routs, and balls, and cards, and idle visitings, or those lower scenes of vanity which equally engage the vulgar mind; even *these* (supposing we are free from the grosser pollutions of the world) will fill the soul with pangs of remorse and foreboding fears. Then shall we know what we have lost by neglecting JESUS, and the ways of righteousness; and be made to feel, what before we would not attend to, that these were not the paths of real pleasure; were miserable comforts; unable to abide the test of a dying hour. “ Ah pleasure, pleasure, (will such an one say) thou forcerefs! Thou destroyer of my soul! Thou once smiledst as with the charms of innocence, now I feel thee “ sting as a viper (b).” “ Where are thy promises of delight? Fool that I was to believe thee! and for the unsatisfying gratifications of sense, to reject the real joy which JESUS, that neglected Saviour, offered to give me at this hour. Now I am comfortless; I have trifled away my golden sands, I have forgotten GOD, and he hath forsaken me. How dearly have I bought my vanities! The pleasures of sin

(b) Prov. xxiii. 32.

“ were

“ were but momentary, but the pains of it
“ are eternal.” Such reflections will often
arise, and close the scene of vanity. And the
dying hour will extort those confessions of
truth from the conscience, in spite of the cruel
kindness of friends and physicians, labouring
to amuse and divert from these racking thoughts
the soul which stands upon the verge of eternity.

But will *riches* bear that day's trial better?
Ah! they who have “ put in the fine gold
“ their confidence,” will find that “ it profits
“ not in a day of wrath (i).” When death
lifts his arm, and, swift as lightning, his
winged messengers, disease and pain, enter the
heart, vain is the hoarded treasure. See that
generally esteemed happy man, who trusted in
riches, stretched upon the bed of languishing
—panting for breath—his throat parched—his
heart fluttering—his eyes growing dim—restless
he turns, and turns again—sleep is fled from
his eye-lids—pain tortures him every moment—
and life's silver cord is loosing. What joy
now can riches bring? Surround his dying bed
with bags of gold, will they alleviate the pains
of the body? purchase a moment's respite

(i) Prov. xi. 4.

from death? or silence the agonizing remonstrances of conscience? Alas! a golden god is a dumb idol, neither “able to kill nor “make alive.” Then, where the world and the things of it have been the supreme pursuit and delight, what a wretched state must it needs be, to be torn from all the worldling counted his happiness, to leave this dear portion behind him for ever, to go—ah, whither? Not to “treasures laid up for him in heaven,” not to the place “where he hath made for himself “friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness;” but where that *rich* man went, who lifted up “his eyes in torment (*k*),” because in this life he had received “his good things, and “was rich in this world, but not rich towards “God. (*l*).”

Now this is the boasted happiness of numbers; this the unutterable pleasure of dying worth so many thousand pounds. O the strange stupidity of man!

Nor will *honour* or *esteem* make our departure at all more satisfactory. What will it then avail you, that you have been caressed in the world, when you are ready to leave it? If you

(*k*) Luke xvi. 23.(*l*) Luke xii. 21.

have made *distinction* your joy, how will your pride be mortified when you go to the grave and mix with common dust, where no crouded levee attends you, except the worms which cover you?

If *learning* hath been your idol, you will find no difference in death; “the wise man dieth as the fool, and then all his thoughts perish (m).” Nor will any of your attainments in science, your skill in languages, the refinedness of your taste, or depth of your penetration, in that day profit you more than they did the great *Grotius*, who with his dying lips is reported to have complained, *Heu vitum perdidit operose nihil agendo*; “I have wasted my life, taking immense pains in doing nothing.”

What satisfaction will it be to you, that, after you are dead, your name shall be ingraven in the annals of fame, if it be not found “written in the Lamb’s book of life?” All your *honours* then will be as insignificant as the escutcheons on your coffin; and stand you in no more stead either to comfort your poor soul, or to acquit you before God “who is no respecter of persons (n).”

(m) Eccles. ii. 16.

(n) Acts x. 34.

Such thoughts perhaps may find their way to you at last, and cannot but produce self-condemnation and heart-rending anguish: proofs too pregnant, that the ways which brought you hither, though strewed with flowers, were neither the paths of happiness below, nor of hope above.

But in that awful season, when all human comforts fail, the ways of righteousness, that ever led to life and happiness, are then peculiarly endeared to us; for “in the path-way
“ thereof there is no death.” The real christian, the living image of his LORD, sets, like the western sun after its shining course, not lost in the ocean of the grave, but moves onward to illumine a new horizon. His most esteemed pleasures upon earth were spiritual; his chief joy was “a reconciled God in
“ CHRIST,” apprehended by faith as his covenant GOD, his everlasting portion: for this
“ GOD, he says, is my GOD for ever and
“ ever, he shall be my guide even unto
“ death (o).” What wonder then, if, when he knows he is hastening to his blissful presence,
“ to see him as he is (p), face to face (q),” his

(o) Psal. xlviii. 14. (p) 1 John iii. 2. (q) 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

heart exults in the expectation? His highest joys here on earth were still imperfect; and, though infinitely superior to the poor joys of sense, unspeakably below what he hopes for in that kingdom, “where GOD hath prepared
 “for those that love him such good things as
 “pass man’s understanding (r).” He looks back on the past; (for the reflection is pleasing) and whilst with thankfulness he traces the evidences of GOD’s love, adores the grace which he hath tasted; disclaims all merit, and confident “in hope of the glory which shall
 “be revealed, expects eternal life the gift of
 “GOD in JESUS CHRIST (s).” His present peaceful state amply repays all the trials which may have attended a life of righteousness; and if, instead of the comforts which have followed him all the days of his pilgrimage, he had never tasted ease before, he would confess that the way which led him to such happiness, in the pangs of death, must needs be paths of life and peace. Eternity now opens its unbounded prospect! “the crown of glory,
 “which fadeth not away,” shines before him. Angels surround his bed, ready to receive his

(r) 1 Cor. li. 9,

(s) Rom. vi. 23.

departing

departing soul, and bear it on their wings to the Paradise of God. Hark! how they shout through the skies! "Lift up your heads, ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that an Heir of glory may come in!" JESUS, the GOD of angels, stands ready to welcome him to his bosom, and place him at his right hand on a throne of glory. "They shall sit down with me, says he, on my throne, as I am set down with my Father on his throne (1)." Far therefore from trembling at the thoughts of parting from the body, as the pleasure-loving, the rich, the esteemed of this world, who have received their consolation—far from the desire to stay, or casting longing, lingering looks behind on a world he knows not how to part with—the *believing soul* stretches forth itself to heaven, looks upwards and forwards with delight, nor dreads the dark valley of the shadow of death; for there stand the golden gates of life and immortality. Big with the expectations of eternal glory, ravished with the foretastes of his mighty bliss, the believer pants with very fervent desire, "to depart and be with

(1) Rev. iii. 21.

"CHRIST,

“CHRIST, which is far better (u).” And in a moment all his desires are accomplished; “Mortality is swallowed up of life (x).”

These are glorious and reviving truths; not the flights of fancy, but the declarations of GOD, and experimentally proved true by the death of thousands, who, with good old *Simeon*, have cried, “Now, LORD, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation (y):” and who have triumphed in the jaws of death; “O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory (z)!”

Such are the issues of the paths of righteousness. Enough indeed to make the wicked say, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his (a).” But we must first be found in the way of righteousness, if we would partake in the comforts of it. My brethren, if you approve the character as excellent, and would enjoy this blessedness, then “go and do likewise.”

(u) Phil. i. 23. (x) 2 Cor. v. 4. (y) Luke ii. 29.
(z) 1 Cor. xv. 55. (a) Numbers xxiii. 10.



